THE ICEBREAKER *NORTHLAND*: NAUTICAL GEOGRAPHIES OF POWER IN TERRITORIAL ALASKA AND BRITISH-MANDATE PALESTINE

PHD THESIS

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ABSTRACT

In 1927, the 200' United States Coast Guard icebreaker *Northland* embarked on its first seasonal Bering Sea Patrol Cruise with 85 officers and crew on board. That same ship became the post-war Palestine blockade-runner *Medinat ha'Yeudim* that transported 3,000 Jewish survivors from the Black Sea to Palestine. In each case, the ship was an essential element in assemblages of political power that coalesced to exert or challenge power, particularly state authority. The Bering Sea Patrol Force ship was known as a 'floating government,' enforcing laws, delivering mail and rescuing ice-bound ships. The *Medinat ha'Yeudim,* with thousands of Jewish survivors onboard, challenged the legitimacy of the British-Mandate of Palestine. This thesis addresses the question of how, when and in what ways ships participate in assemblages of power using the research surface of these two versions of *Northland* sourced from its object biography.

PREFACE

This research was supported through a Reid Cross-Departmental PhD Scholarship. The research agenda evolved from a proposal to investigate the relationship between objects and national identity along the landlocked Hungarian/Romanian border into a maritime case study focused on an icebreaking, refugee-running ship that started 'life' as a US Coast Guard floating government. The subjects may seem worlds apart, but they come together at the intersection of power relations and materiality.

I have benefitted greatly from consistent and persistent support from my primary supervisor, Peter Adey. His wise counsel has been freely given and was always welcomed. More recently, I thank Klaus Dodds for his support and for stepping in to cover as co-supervisor until Antara Datta agreed to join the team from the Political and International Relations Department. These changes followed the terrible loss of Professor Chris Rumford. I was privileged to have the opportunity to present my ideas at seminars in Southampton, Warwick and Bristol Universities as well as Royal Holloway and receive insightful feedback in every case.

I have learned an immense amount through this project, not only about the process of research and the history of this ship, but about the politics and geographies of Alaska, Palestine and Israel. Archivists and museum directors in Alaska, Washington D.C., Seattle, Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, Haifa, and London have been generous with their time and advice. The Hagana Archives would have remained an enigma without the assistance of Hannan Harpaz, who spent two working days in the archive translating some of the most fascinating and insightful material used in this thesis.

I will be forever grateful to friends and family across the globe who supported me as I made my way though this incredible process; reading drafts, delivering sustenance, hope and encouragement on a regular basis. Support from my mother Vera Alexander, daughter Celia and son Everett has been particularly nourishing from the outset. And although my friend Laurie Poulson died in 2012 'ABT' (all but thesis) before she could submit, her courage and ambition have stayed with me all along.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

A 'Retro-Chic' Ship-shaped Analysis

'How to study assemblages?
One particular way forward might seem surprisingly retro-chic: historical analysis'.
- Jason Dittmer, 2014, p. 396.

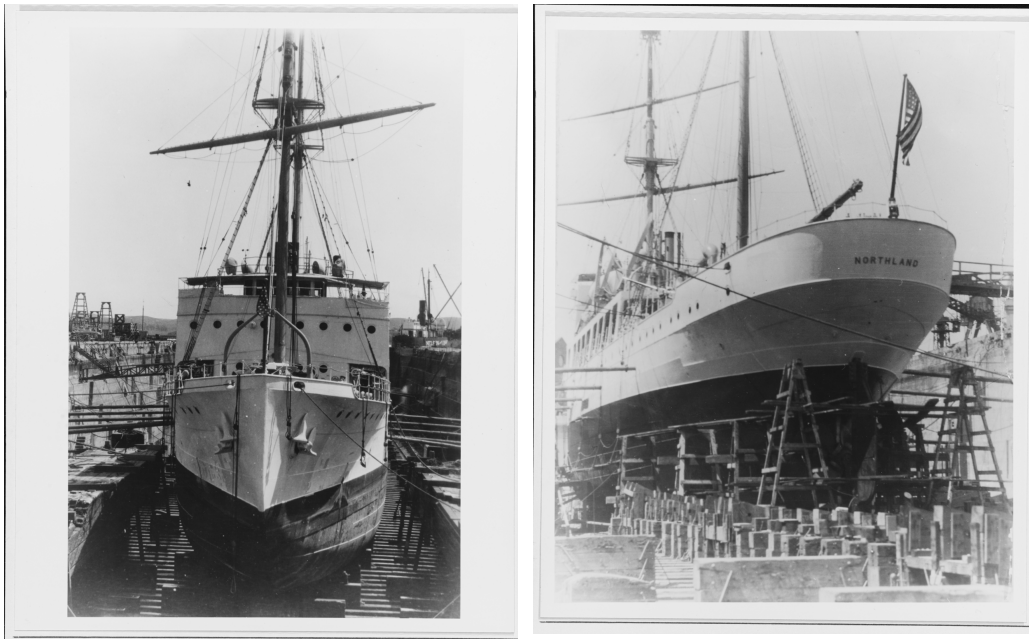


Figure 1. Two views of *Northland* in original configuration at dry dock, c. 1933.
Source: Naval History and Heritage Command, Washington, D.C.

Workers at the Virginia Newport News Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Company who welded together Hull #318 according to U.S. Coast Guard Plan No. 44407 in 1926 knew they were building a ship designed for ice operations in Territorial Alaska. Pre-statehood Alaska, in the first half of the 20th century, was a resource-rich but sparely populated U.S. territory.[1] Its coastal communities and islands were accessible only by ship, and only seasonally, due to sea ice and weather conditions. The plans specified four times the welds of any other ship they'd constructed, it was double hulled for reinforcement against the ice, and lined with cork for warmth. Its

[1] The territory of Alaska is equal to approximately 7.2 times that of the United Kingdom, and its coastline equivalent to the rest of the US coastline combined.

cutaway bow was designed not only to part water, but to break ice by sliding on top and then crushing it downwards. What they and the naval architects who designed it could never have imagined was its future incarnation as a post-war Palestine blockade-runner that survived interception ramming by the Royal Navy to become Israel's first warship. Tracing that improbable trajectory through the biography of this ship reveals a wealth of geographical evidence testifying to the importance of ships as participants in diverse configurations of assemblages of power. Power both to dominate and to resist.

Vessels surface perspectives at the intersection of politics and power that are simply not discernable from fixed points on land. These physical, mobile objects and the seas they operate in have begun to draw our attention as geographers loosen our allegiance to terrestrially fixed research subjects to also acknowledge that the maritime world has much to tell us, as Phil Steinberg and others have argued for some time. This thesis responds to William Hasty and Kimberly Peters' call for increased focus on ships, arguing that 'Geographies of ships enable us to ask how the more-than-human world matters' (Hasty & Peters, 2012, p. 670) and to William Walters' argument to develop a 'viapolitical' approach that situates the analytical gaze from the vantage point of vessels (Walters, 2015).

A ship is a malleable object, capable of being re-formed without breaking. It may retain its core structure from 'birth' to 'death' yet be substantially transformed by new owners for new purposes and deployed in different maritime geographies. Until, that is, such time as it decays, sinks or is stripped down for scrap. At which point it is a shipwreck[2] or reconstituted as raw material - but it is no longer a ship. Its remnants, and the flotsam and jetsam, may find their way into other structures. A ship's biography often contains traces of multiple incarnations - several ships emergent from the corpus of a single ship.

Just as a human biography contains many nested biographies, the object biography of the ship built on Hull #318 contains distinct episodes that include its original configuration as the Arctic icebreaker United States Coast Guard Cutter *Northland* and three further major incarnations; in naval service in WWII North Atlantic

[2] The term 'shipwreck', in maritime law, refers to the remains of a ship that has suffered a major maritime disaster.

designated as US Navy Warship WPG - 48, next as the Mediterranean Zionist Blockade-runner *Medinat ha'Yehudim*, and finally return to naval service as the Israeli warship *Eilat* – 16.[3.]

This project contributes to scholarship in maritime-oriented political geography by investigating the ship as an essential element in assemblages of political power in cases where political relations are fundamentally dependent on ship participation. The ship, in this scenario, is an object entangled in distributed assemblages of human and more-than human elements that coalesce to exert or challenge power, particularly state authority. The research addresses how, when and in what ways does the ship participate in such assemblages and what is the significance of its contribution?

To address these research objectives, I investigate how a ship can surface unique affordances via aspects of place, materiality and assemblage that together effect sea-shaped power relations. I unpack several episodes in the biographical trajectory of a particular ship through changes in its purpose, ownership, geography, and material adaptations to unearth the nature of its entanglement and contribution to power dynamics in contrasting assemblages of federal power in Territorial Alaska and challenge to imperial power in British-Mandate Palestine.

[3] I refer to this ship throughout as '*Northland,'* meaning the constant material structure, and refer to it by its designated name when referring to a specific configuration or version of the vessel. I refrain from using the traditional maritime pronoun 'she.'

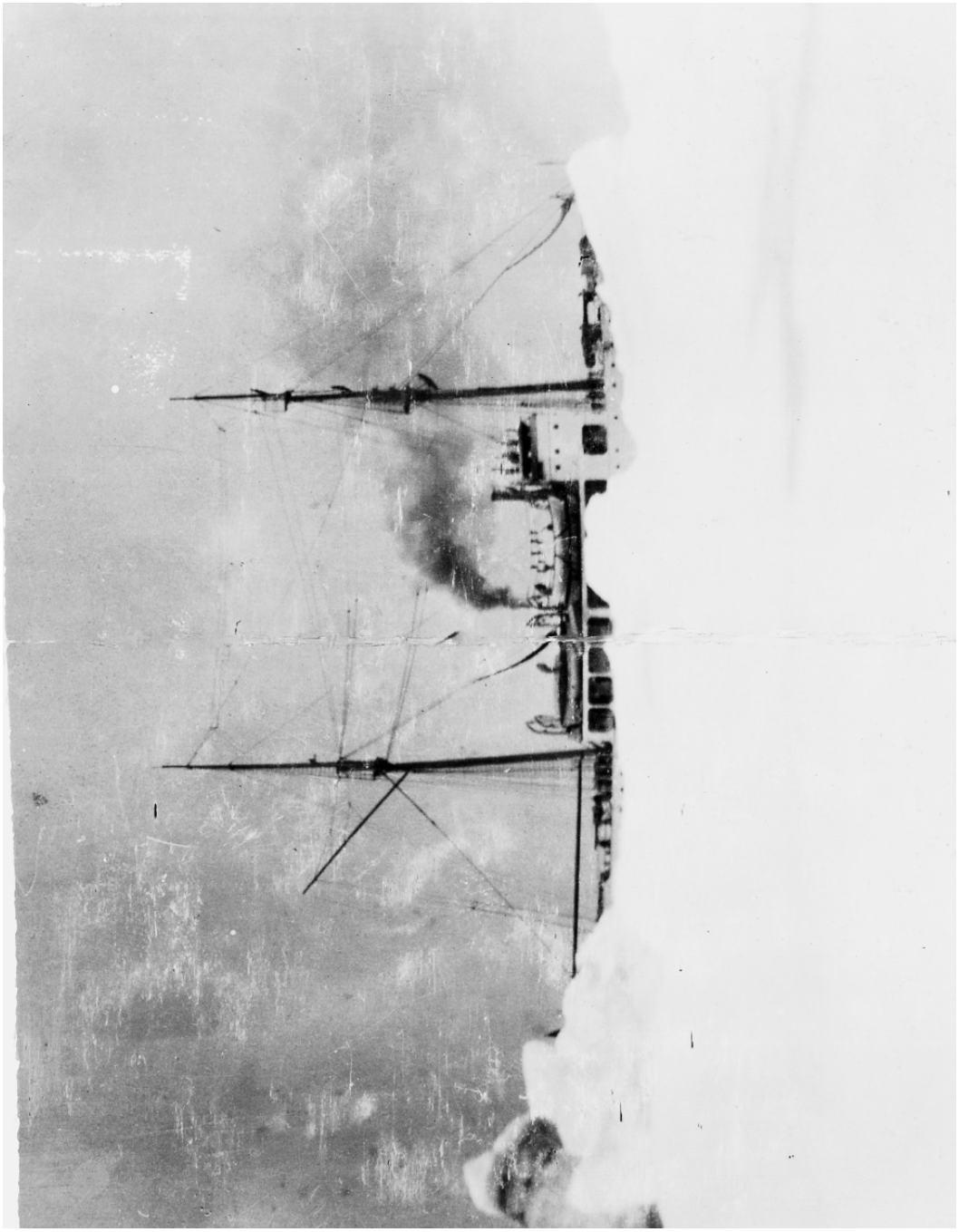


Figure 2. The USCG Cutter *Northland* in Bering Sea Ice, c. 1932.
Source: United States Coast Guard Historian's Office, Washington, D.C.

THE *NORTHLAND* – A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

TERRITORIAL ALASKA

> *'It is worth a year of the life of a man with a soul larger than a turnip, to see a real iceberg in all its majesty and grandeur'.*
> - Willis Abbot, 1902, p. 179.

In the temporal and geographical arc of *Northland's* biography, thousands of people commanded it, crewed it, took passage on it, traded on it, were married on it, judged in it, rescued by it, tracked and intercepted it, and were hidden in its secret spaces. In 1927, it was commissioned by the U.S. Treasury Department as a United States Coast Guard Cutter and christened '*USCG Cutter Northland*' on May 9 when a bottle of apple juice was smashed against the side of its hull - a sober christening dictated by the constraints of Prohibition. Although Coast Guard shipyard work was almost exclusively directed towards refitting naval destroyers for the 'Rum Patrol,' *Northland* was destined for another purpose. It was designed and built to replace the infamous *USCG Cutter Bear*, a former Clyde-built wooden sailing whaler that had served the Coast Guard in Alaska from 1886. Most famously commanded by Mike' Hellfire' Healy,[4] the *Bear* had been in the center of numerous news-making events; from arctic rescues, to reindeer transport and epidemic response.

The Coast Guard was created when two existing government services, the Revenue-Cutter Service and the Life-Saving Service, were combined 1915. Under the Treasury Department, its duties included customs protection duties and lifeguarding, assignments that its first Commandant Captain Bertholf interpreted as both civil and military, but mostly military. 'Military structure, and the discipline developed through drills and training was to be core to the way the service was run' (Johnson, 1987, pp. 22-3). The Revenue-Cutter Service was already in service in Territorial Alaska, and its extended duties are discussed in detail in the empirical Chapter 3.

[4] He was given the name when he commanded the *Bear* from 1886 to 1895, in recognition of his enthusiastic prosecution of the law, '…he preferred the instant and strong correctives of the frontier [justice] to the legal niceties of less harsh climates' (Kroll, 2010, p. 54).

So, the anachronistic *Bear's* days passed, and *Northland* was to supplant it as the sleek, modern, steel-built, ice-hardened future of seasonal floating government for Territorial Alaska. As a quasi-naval vessel, the ship like those of the navy was effectively sovereign U.S. territory, without respect to its geographical position.[5] When it set off from the Bethesda naval docks for its shakedown[6] cruise on 9 June 1927, it was freshly painted iceberg white from stem to stern with a complement of 84 uniformed officers and crew aboard. Its operational mission as part of the USCG Bering Sea Patrol was to exert federal power over a remote pelagic arctic territory extending from the Aleutians to Point Barrow. The harsh weather and sea ice endemic to the Bering Sea even in summer was a constant concern in every annual cruise from 1927 to 1938. The language of ice description gives some indication of the variety and importance of ice in the Bering Sea and the cultures that depend upon it.

Floating ice known as 'floes' are the most common ice form encountered during the Bering Sea Patrol season from June to October and make up the 'ice pack.' Mini icebergs made of sea ice called 'growlers' are set awash on the currents. New seasonal ice forms round rimmed 'pancake ice' which stack up as they are pushed together by the wind and currents (Armstrong *et al.,* 1966). 'Except in bays and sheltered coves, the Bering Sea ice is 'continually kept in motion, breaking up, piling and telescoping by the action of variable [and unpredictable] winds and currents' (USCP, 1931, pp. 303-4). The ice and weather conditions delimited the Bering Sea Patrol cruise season and set the navigational environment of the Bering and Arctic seas apart from other Coast Guard patrol locales. In the '20s and '30s, the key stop of St. Lawrence Island was generally open to navigation in early June. Norton Sound was not navigable until middle to late June. The lack of accurate charting and surveying posed further challenges. The Bering Sea Patrol ships conducted soundings while on patrol, the data from which appeared in subsequent editions of the U.S. Coastal Pilot, the nautical atlas published by the government's hydrological survey.

[5] Warships are regarded as political and military instruments of the State and are considered sovereign territory whether located in territorial waters the high seas or within another state's waters.
[6] A shakedown is a preliminary cruise used to test the ship and its systems before going into full service.

The patrol performed many functions, including postal services; medical and dental care; transportation of teachers, ministers, scientists and priests; federal law and fish and game regulation enforcement; the servicing of Coast Guard Stations and search and rescue. In carrying out these diverse duties, the vessel connected ship to shore and mixed diverse populations as Native Alaskans, officers, crew, and passengers mingled on its decks, in the mess rooms and quarters (sleeping spaces filled with bunks constructed of pipe). Sometimes, the spaces on the ship also served as places of mediation softening the effects of extended federal power. Until 1959, Alaska was governed as a federal *territory*, meaning that while it had a legislature, it had very limited rule-making powers and its single representative to Congress was a non-voting member. With statehood, Alaska's legislature was granted the same powers that other states possessed and allocated two senators and a voting member of the House of Representatives.

Figure 3. The *Northland* WPG-45 in North Atlantic, c. 1943.
Source: United States Coast Guard Historian's Office, Washington, D.C.

WWII North Atlantic

'Dodging ice flows, passing through narrow openings and trying not to get stuck between the flows, often at full speed, made this a very thrilling chase'.

– Commander Ken Bilderback, USCG (Ret), 1948.

After serving nearly two decades in the ice-laden arctic, *Northland* was decommissioned in 1938, but quickly re-commissioned and returned to the East Coast for Admiral Byrd's second Antarctic Expedition in 1939. The eruption of war in Europe curtailed Byrd's plans, and instead of heading south the ship was routed eastwards to the naval dockyard in New York. It departed the yard in August of 1940 for Greenland and the North Atlantic. The U.S. had not yet entered the war, and *Northland* was assigned to the 'Neutrality Patrol,' created by President Roosevelt to ensure the safety of US shipping under the Monroe Doctrine 'system of cooperative defence of the Western Hemisphere' (Johnson, 1987, p. 175). Thus, it was again operating in Arctic conditions; surveying the ice-packed fiords of Greenland for potential submarine shelter and searching out German radio stations. It is credited with making the first capture of a German ship by the US Navy, and its crew destroyed a German weather station on land soon after (each accomplishment under the 'neutral' mission).

When the US joined the war in 1941, *Northland* became Rear Admiral Edward 'iceberg' Smith's flagship vessel of the Northeast Greenland Patrol. It was extensively remodelled for war; its original masts were replaced with one radar mast aft of the bridge and a taller mast aft of the boat deck for hoisting a Grumman J2F-5 observation floatplane. Depth charge racks were installed on both sides of the quarterdeck in preparation for submarine warfare. Twenty-millimetre guns were positioned on the boat deck. The *Northland* was then re-designated a war ship - naval vessel *WPG – 49*.[7] In May 1944, *Northland's* hull and superstructure was re-painted with blue and grey ice-inspired geometric camouflage, its decks enhanced with additional new armament and survey equipment, and its aft top deck adapted to accommodate a hoist. It received two battle stars commendations for its wartime service.

[7] The letter 'W' is assigned to Coast Guard ships and the designation 'PG' signifies a 'Gun Boat'.

Figure 4. The illegal immigrant ship MV *Northland* trying to avoid the British Warship HMS Cheviot, 2 February 1947. Source: Yad Vashem, Jerusalem.

BRITISH-MANDATE PALESTINE

> *'…the cutter whose history has been an open book marked by valiant service suddenly became a mystery ship yesterday…. all efforts to ascertain her whereabouts and future destiny have been unavailing'.*
>
> – *New York Times,* June 4, 1947 p. 55.

After the war, *Northland* was decommissioned, thereby stripping it of its governmental identity as a naval vessel. Its identity was in limbo, owned by the government but no longer state territory. The WPG designation was painted over as the hull was repainted a dull grey hardly disguising the patina of war-inflicted dents and water-born rust. Once armament and survey equipment were removed, the vessel was turned over to the US Maritime Commission to dispose of it via a surplus 'small ship' sale. In 1946, the Weston Trading Company of New York purchased it for $50,000 USD. It was a front for the Zionist organization Hagana and its offshoot, Mossad le'Aliyah Bet (Mossad).[8] Mossad ran a multi-year clandestine project to

[8] The Hebrew *Mossad le'Aliyah Bet* roughly translates to the 'Office of Second Immigration' and was the organization that coordinated clandestine immigration from post-war Europe to Palestine. I refer to 'Mossad' as the organization and 'Aliyah Bet' as the immigration project.

transport Jewish WWII survivors to British-Mandate Palestine in defiance of restrictive quotas established by the British-Mandate government set out in what is commonly referred to as the '1939 White Paper'.

The *Northland* was moved to a dockyard in Baltimore, surveyed and the company's agent supervised essential repairs. In the spring of 1947, a professional and volunteer crew sailed the de-mobbed icebreaker, now flying the Panamanian flag, from Baltimore across the Atlantic first to Port de Buc and then to Bayonne, France. There, Mossad personnel, known as 'emissaries' joined the ship and supervised its reconfiguration by French carpenters into a crude passenger ship. When the adaptations were completed, the modified *Northland* was barely recognizable. Under the dual command of merchant officers and Hagana emissaries, *Northland* pushed on further eastward through the Turkish Straits and across the newly lowered 'iron curtain' into the Black Sea. In the Bulgarian port of Burgas nearly 3,000 Jewish survivors embarked. It then reversed course back into the Mediterranean, headed for Palestine and was intercepted by Royal Navy destroyers approximately 25 nautical miles (nm) off the coast of Palestine. The *Northland* now also named 'Hagana Ship *Medinat ha'Yehudim'* was boarded, towed to Haifa and confiscated by British-Mandate authorities. Its passengers were deported to detention camps on Cyprus.[9]

Israeli Navy

However, just a few months later it was reclaimed by the newly established Israeli state and reincarnated as a naval vessel once again, this time flying the Star of David flag. One of only two Aliyah Bet ships (out of 63) that survived the royal interception ramming, the arctic ice-breaker was re-commissioned for war once more as the *Eilat - 16*, the first Israeli warship. The aft passenger deck adaptation was removed, and the hull repainted naval grey. While carrying limited armament (and sporting several decoys), its decks were strafed by the Egyptian Air Force in the ensuing battle for

[9] This brief history is derived from multiple sources, including archival materials (Colonial Office, Cabinet Officer and Admiralty records in The National Archives of the UK, Hagana and Palyam Archives, Tel Aviv; Memoires (Patzert, 1994; Hadari, 1985); and texts on the Palestine Patrol (Liebriech, 2012; Stewart, 2000).

independence. It also escorted the first transport ship that returned Cyprus internees to Palestine, now Israel. As the navy acquired newer, better-equipped vessels, *Eilat – 16* was re-purposed as a training ship *Matzpen,* and later utilized as a floating barracks. In 1963, it was ceremoniously decommissioned in Haifa with former passengers and crew in attendance then sent to Italy to be scrapped.

TWO KEY EPISODES

This thesis focuses on two of these incarnations to develop an account of the contribution of non-human ship-shaped affordances to differentiated power assemblages and to analyze how those contributions mattered in the exercise, contestation and mediation of power in the 'rough and tumble, power-driven model of the political' (Bennett, 2010, p. 406).

The majority of the empirical work concerns the ship's service in Territorial Alaska where it was engaged in extending federal power into the remote and sparsely populated Bering Sea Patrol locale, and in post-war British-Mandate Palestine. I chose to focus on these two episodes for several reasons. First, constraining the research surface provided scope for interrogating the ship in detail. Each of these episodes is supported by extensive archival evidence. For other major episodes, there is only a modest amount of information regarding the ship's WWII service and access to Israeli Defense Force archives is highly problematic. The two also set out highly contrasting scenarios of power dynamics. Extension of state federal power in the first instance, and challenge to state authority in the second.

In both the Alaska and Palestine episodes, only the affordances embedded in ships could have served both the owner's operational purposes. Aviation had not yet been established in 1920s Alaska; the ship's ice-capable mobility and robust materiality were required to govern federally controlled remote communities and islands. In post-war Palestine, land and air routes into Palestine were effectively blocked to most Jewish survivors, reluctant Zionists lacking one of the limited official entry visas. That the same ship served such divergent purposes is somewhat remarkable, though it is true that many a ship has undergone substantive metamorphic changes

in use and structure over time. Merchant ships, for example, have been reincarnated as radio, pirate and slave ships (Peters, 2011; Hasty, 2014; and Rediker, 2007). Lifeboats and fishing trawlers were temporarily transformed into Operation Dynamo troop carriers to evacuate troops from Dunkirk in 1940. Yet, the contrast between *Northland's* service as a territorial government enforcer and its deployment as a law-breaking Mediterranean refugee-runner is an unusual and intriguing transformation, one which makes these episodes from its biography a rewarding research surface for investigating ship modes of participation in extending and contesting state power.

State power was produced, wielded, contested, nuanced and mediated by various ways in which the ship was perceived, its missions modified, and spaces transformed via changes in ownership, identity, usage and physical structure and presentation. In Alaska service, the ship's entanglement was firmly weighted toward the state within a power geometry that was essentially colonial and largely uncontested[10], but also mediated by ice, interventions in law, census-taking, and scientific activity. In Palestine, the post-war geo-political context was far more complicated. Here, the ship's entanglement in clandestine immigration deepened gradually, corresponding to changes in ownership, personnel, physical adaptations, geographical location, passenger embarkation and (un) declared destination.

This episode is characterized by an oscillating duality of covert and above-board activity - a constant mediation between regulatory compliance and mission objectives, between allies and opponents, hidden spaces and declared intentions. Evidence from these two contrasting episodes within this single *Northland* case study reveals differentiated modes and depths of ship participation in distributed assemblages of 'power over' a remote territory and 'power to' challenge state authority in Palestine.

[10] The US possession of Alaska was uncontested in the sense that the international community accepted the purchase and transfer of the territory from Russia. Confrontations over resources with foreign fishing vessels, sealers and whalers were an ongoing concern. Native Alaskans had not yet activated the Alaska Native Brotherhood and Alaska Native Sisterhood, organizations that would contest state and federal rights to traditional tribal lands and resources. The Alaska Native Land Claims Settlement Act of 1971 ceded 44 million acres to 13 Native Corporations (43 U.S.C. 1601 et seq.).

Though the core structure of *Northland* held constant throughout its material existence, even the brief narrative above demonstrates that this one ship contained, within its material and historical self, many versions. As William Hasty observes with respect to one kind of ship, 'Current understandings of the pirate ship - and perhaps many other kinds of ships besides - hold only so far as we can hold space still' (Hasty, 2014, p. 365). Holding the absent *Northland* still enough to understand it and the role it played in assemblages of power presents theoretical and methodological opportunities and challenges.

TWO POWER ASSEMBLAGES

I examine the role of the ship within two distinct distributed assemblages of power. The assemblages are composed of various elements. Following Dittmer, Bennett, and Waters, I argue is vital to follow the ship, 'because power is enacted through assemblage, it must be understood as distributed among the various components of that assemblage, human and non-human. That is to say, the properties and capabilities of non-human components of an assemblage shape outcomes in highly contingent ways' (Whatmore, 2002 in Dittmer, 2014, p. 389). I find the evidence from *Northland's* biography supports this assertion in the context of two principal assemblages in which it participated in Alaska and Palestine.

First, The Bering Sea Patrol was the mechanism for extending federal control over the resources, people, liminal lands and Bering and Arctic Seas of pre-state Alaska. The Bering Sea Patrol assemblage was composed of the official USCG mandate, multiple ships, people (officers, crews, passengers), legal regime and Arctic maritime environment and infrastructure. Second Mossad le'Aliyah Bet (Aliyah Bet) was mechanism for challenging British control of post-war pre-Israel Palestine via the Mediterranean Sea. This assemblage was composed of the Hagana, multiple ships, people (organizers, hired merchant crew, volunteers, passengers), legal regime and Mediterranean maritime environment and infrastructure.

Each of these assemblages was ontologically a maritime composition, entirely dependent on the ship as a component. Without these non-human elements, these

particular assemblages could not, would not, have come together. Water's *viapolitical* stance of placing the ship at the center of analysis, is reinforced when the ship is integral to the political power dynamics in question. 'A whole field of otherwise overlooked struggles is brought into view once we investigate migration from the angle of its vehicles' (Walters, 2015, p. 472). This project resurrects the historical angles of the two versions of *Northland* to investigate the ship's role in the two assemblages.

Theoretical Frame

In Chapter 1, I cover the theoretical foundation for this project which rests on the aforementioned concept of distributed assemblage, an approach that acknowledges the contributions, and even recognizes the vibrant material agency, of more-than-human elements. I investigate the usefulness of the concept of object affordances with respect to vessels and construct an analytical schema to identify and assess their participation in each assemblage. I accomplish this by investigating the 'thingness' of ships and the maritime context in which it operated calling upon a range of disciplines including geography, mobility studies, material culture, architecture, archeology, anthropology, and naval architecture. As Hasty and Peters observe regarding Sorrenson's work on the ship as a scientific instrument, 'The ship then, is not simply a vehicle for exploring the creation of knowledge but is part and parcel of that knowledge' (Hasty & Peters, 2012, p. 667). Another way view is to understand the ship as an element in the assemblage of scientific exploration.

I introduce key concepts about power and the terrestrial built environment to this maritime subject and find the analytical distinction between 'power over' and 'power to' retains its usefulness at sea wherein power is understood as both positive and negative and it is crucial to discern between '…force, coercion, manipulation, seduction and authority' (Dovey, 1999, p. 10). Further, the mobile maritime context underscores Massey's concept of place as a multiplicity of simultaneous trajectories and power-geometries at sea. Finally, maritime geographies come into clearer focus when our lexicon is expanded to include the particularities of sea and ship spaces. In

this thesis, I use a set of terms derived from John Agnew's schema for place and modified to account for the mobility of ships (see Appendix B). In general, I use seafaring vocabulary throughout this work and provide footnotes for uncommon terms to anchor the context as resolutely maritime. The angle of a ship is, after all, entirely nautical.

LITERATURE OF SHIPS AND SEAS

This thesis is most concerned with literature on ships and the oceans that address the relationship between ships and power, materiality, mobility and assemblage. This project draws on recent ship scholarship, within and external to geography. It further calls on literature from archaeology and cultural studies to investigate the material nature of objects, and on political theory for understanding assemblage and the role of the more-than-human elements.

William Walters (2015) advocates for a viapolitics approach to understanding political struggle that situates the angles of vessels and vehicles as a lens through which to develop new perspectives on political struggles over migration, and as sites of struggle worthy of study in themselves. Kimberly Peters (2011) PhD thesis examines the semi-stationary, garrison-like Pirate Radio Ships known as 'Radio Caroline,' interpreting the series of Caroline ships as politically and geographically marginal places. The conflict between the British government and the Caroline organizers highlights ways in which the sea was central to the legal and political struggle. Materiality is also implicated in power geometries of ship-spaces.

Howell (1999) deconstructs the geography of the RMS *Titanic* to reveal how class-consciousness was built into its physical structure and spatial organization. Marcus Rediker's (2007) historical study of the slave ship (analyses ways in which ships were materially and socially converted into slavers and their crew into jailers. In contrast, William Hasty's (2014) discussion of pirate ship metamorphosis focuses on a subaltern 'power to', in which the pirates' physical and social transformation of the ships they seized embodied an alternative purpose and social structure. In a very different vein, Ryan (2006) posits that Lady Brassey's creation of an ordered,

domestic, safe haven on board ship may also be regarded as a fragile attempt to fashion a place in which to contain the limitless, unfathomable space of the ocean. Gregson, Crang and Watkins (2011) argue the social and physical death of naval ships connects to residue military masculinities in civilian life through material culture of artifacts connected to an object's (a ship's) death. Likewise, Votolato's (2012) book *Ship* explores the unique character of ships as objects and the powerful affect they generate in those who maintain strong connections to them. Finally, Crang, Hughes, Gregson, Norris and Ahamed (2013) look at the end stage of a ship's lifecycle and the circulation of the material remnants of ships.

To address a dearth of scholarship on ship mobilities, Anim-Addo, Hasty and Peters' (2015) edited a special edition of the journal *Mobilities* to bring together scholarship related to the mobility of ships and mobilities facilitated by ships. Peters and Turner (2015) exhume the convict ship and deconstruct it as a carceral place of immobility paradoxically that was predicated on the mobility of ships and Peters' (2014) article 'Tracking (Im)mobilities at Sea' considers the challenges of extra-territorial surveillance and difficulties of controlling vessels on the high seas and within territorial zones.

Ships and Seas are understood to be mutually constitutive. Philip Steinberg's (2001) foundational text 'The Social Construction of the Ocean' served to bring the oceans into focus for human geographers understood as a 'territorial political economy'. Anderson and Peters' edited volume *'Water Worlds: Human Geographies of the Ocean'* (2014) construes the 'water world' as ocean-spaces of experiences, as lived in, and as spheres we think from. It characterizes the sea as perpetual movement and positions our experiences of it as necessarily mediated by ships, scuba tanks, surfboards and bodies. In this volume, Peters examines the more-than-human dimensions of ocean space, considering how the material nature of the ocean exerts an influence on humans.

Laloë (2014) analyses the (im)possiblilty of accurately tracing historical ship tracks and also highlights the value of the traces they do leave in knowledge production about the oceans. Lambert, Martins & Ogborn (2006) advocate for a sea and ocean-centric version of historical geography, arguing that studies of the ocean develop

geographies of spaces beyond the local and national, and attest to the relationships between human and non-human world. Steinberg (2013) states that we must engage with the ocean as material space characterized by movement and continual reformation across all of its dimensions. In 'Future Promises for Contemporary Social and Cultural Geographies of the Sea,' Peters (2010) argues the sea as…a vital space and one that is integral to the workings of the world as we currently know it.

Returning to the ship, scholarship that approaches the ship directly as an assemblage or an element within a larger assemblage is scarce. Pugh (2016) used the relational turn in island geographies to bring together island, sea, and ship relations 'bound together in complex and shifting relations and assemblages' in the case of the 'Landship' (Kado, 2017) interprets the ship as assemblage in Melville's literary shipboard geographies.

Catchpole and Faurer (1985) show how ship's logs have been analyzed to reconstruct sea-ice conditions in Hudson Bay using evidence in materials dating back to 1751 sourced from the Hudson's Bay Company archives. Sorrenson's much cited article (1996) on 'The Ship as a Scientific Instrument' described how ships shaped the kind of information observers collected and mediated the interplay between representation and reality at the heart of geography of the time. More recently, Millar (2013) investigated the practice of measuring sea depth as extracting scientific and instrumental knowledge from British Polar expedition narratives. 'The ship then, is not simply a vehicle for exploring the creation of knowledge but is part and parcel of that knowledge' (Hasty & Peters, 2012, p. 667). Finally, in Peters and Hasty's thorough review (2012) of the ship in geography and advocacy for turning our attention to the geography of ships, they highlight how such geographies might 'actively reframe existing knowledge and histories and moreover raise new questions and lines of inquiry because of their distinct spatiality' (Hasty & Peters, 2012, p. 671).

NAUTICAL CONTRIBUTION

In light of the ship scholarship reviewed above, this study positions 'the ship' as the center of investigation, a correction for what Hasty and Peters' argues has been a short coming in the discipline as, '…the ship, where it has featured, has usually been a vehicle for broader geographical investigations rather than being an explicit focal point of those investigations' (Hasty & Peters, 2012, p. 666). Lambert *et al*. suggest we can use ship studies to decentralize the nation-state centered historical master narratives (Lambert *et al*., 2006, p. 480), but ships also enable us to look at the nation-state from a different angle with respect to its power (or lack of). This work makes a substantial contribution to political geography by advancing our geographical knowledge of power dynamics in a distinctly nautical context from the angle of a ship.

THESIS STRUCTURE

Methodology

In Chapter 2, I describe my methodological approach and the layered, mixed-method strategy designed to draw out the extent and modes of *Northland's* entanglement in the distributed power assemblages of the Bering Sea Patrol and Aliyah Bet. The principal method I use is an unabashedly retro-chic historical extensive archival research to build an in-depth geo-biography of *Northland*, and use ideas borrowed from 'event ecology' to identify significant events for in-depth research and analysis. The archival work is supported with supplementary interviews, site visits and 'doing' methods including blueprint manipulation, image making, and model-building.

Empirical Content

Chapter 3 examines evidence from *Northland's* service in Territorial Alaskan Bering Sea Patrol and is the first of two substantial empirical chapters. Each of the two empirical chapters is divided into an introduction, segmented event analyses and a conclusion. I introduce the geographical and political context of 1920s and 1930s Alaska and the Coast Guard's Bering Sea Patrol operation. I then give an account of a set of 'analytical pauses' sourced from ships logs, reports and passenger accounts during particular moments during the ship's decade-long service in Alaska. I use these pauses to uncover and analyze evidence as to the extent and mode of *Northland's* participation in the Bering Sea Patrol assemblage of extension and mediation of federal 'power over' a portion of Territorial Alaska, and to evaluate the type and extent of the affordances that it contributed to the assemblage.

The second empirical chapter, Chapter 4, interrogates evidence from *Northland's* service as a Clandestine Immigration Ship in the Aliyah Bet 'fleet'. It focuses on evidence from *Northland's* service in the Hagana assemblage in which it was

enrolled to challenge the authority of the British-Mandate in Palestine. I introduce the geographic and geopolitical context of post-war Europe. I then give an account of a set of 'analytical pauses,' in this case compressed in a single-year time frame. I use the pauses to uncover and analyze evidence as to the extent and mode of *Northland's* participation in the Hagana assemblage of 'power to' contest the legitimacy and longevity of British over Mediterranean Palestine, and to evaluate the type and extent of the affordances that it contributed to the assemblage.

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study takes a *viapolitical* ride on the historical, material corpus of the ship *Northland* using episodes from its biography as empirical material to analyze ways in which the vessel was entangled in power dynamics. Viapolitics is the term coined by William Walters to encourage scholarship attentive to vessels and in vehicles (Walters, 2015). This chapter sets out a theoretical framework to support this approach, connecting the constructs of assemblage, place and lively materiality to interpret and analyze the vessel's participation in the extension and contestation of political power as produced through surface ship-shaped affordances.

First, I use the key construct of *assemblage* as a unifying concept to position and interpret the ship as a maritime assemblage of humans and things *and* as an essential non-human element in the broader assemblages of the USCG's Bering Sea Patrol in Territorial Alaska and Mossad's Aliyah Bet project in Palestine. I also incorporate political theorist Jane Bennett's ideas about *distributed assemblages* as a way of discerning the vitality of non-human elements of an assemblage (Bennett, 2010), and how ships can be understood as possessing such agentic qualities.

The characterization of *power* I employ is borrowed from architectural theorist Kim Dovey, whose work on the relationship of built structures and power embraces notions of both domination and capacity as embedded in material structures. I turn to scholarship on ship space as marginal (Peters, 2011) transformative (Rediker, 2007; Hasty, 2014) and mobile (Anim-Addo *et al*., 2014) places. I borrow from *Processual* theory (somewhat counter intuitively) to 'hold space still' to analyze ship modes of participation in power-infused *moments* or p*auses* produced within assemblages. Finally, I borrow from material culture's concept of *affordances* to approach the empirical evidence in Chapters 3 and 4, affordances understood as the capacities associated with objects that emerge from the dynamic exchange between people and things in the world. Each of these concepts is discussed in the following text, with particular attention paid to developing ideas about the ship as vibrant matter.

ASSEMBLAGE

The concept of assemblage, taken from Deleuze and Guattari (Deleuze & Guattari, (1993 translation) is theoretically dense and practically problematic, but proffers a construct which crucially accounts for non-human elements of a whole, as well as human elements. 'Most obviously, assemblage functions as a name for unity across difference, i.e. for describing alignments or wholes between different actors without losing sight of the specific agencies that form assemblages' (McFarlane & Anderson, 2011, p. 162). Ships are described frequently as assemblages in geographical texts in diverse ways. A non-exhaustive list includes ships as 'artefact assemblage' (Adams, 2001); 'assemblages of relations' (Jones 2012); 'assemblage of colonial space and resistance' (Davies & Dwyer, 2013) 'mobilising assemblage' (Martin, 2013),'floating assemblage on the move' (Hasty, 2014) and 'spatial assemblage' (Steinberg, 2013).

As Martina Kado argues, 'It is no stretch to connect the concept of the assemblage with the make-up and functioning of the ship…Any ship can be read as an assemblage of human and nonhuman, natural and technical, organic and inorganic elements in that it comes together and is taken apart, perhaps more than once, in every singular voyage' (Kado, 2017, p. 2). Acknowledging the validity of Kado's assertion, I extend this (relatively) straightforward thinking about ships as assemblage and follow McFarland and Anderson, to include '…a more radical sense of openness and possibility within the constitution of power, disease or politics' (McFarlane & Anderson, 2011, p. 162).

Craig Martin, for example, uses assemblage to include the ship within '…the broader set of maritime logistics into which a ship is bound' (Martin in Anim-Addo *et al*., 2014, p. 346). In the first instance, the *Northland* as a government vessel in the assemblage of the USCG Bering Sea Patrol was deeply enrolled in the above-board assemblage of federal power extension, 'power over' the remote waters and communities of Alaska. In the second, as a ship in Mossad's 'underground' Aliyah Bet clandestine immigration fleet, it was a critical participant in challenging the authority of the British-Mandate in Palestine. But perceiving the ship as an assemblage and an element in a broader assemblage does not provide enough

visibility as to *how* it is an element. That is, what capacities and qualities the ship contributes to the assemblage. Jane Bennett ascribes agency to Darwin's worms as they defecate to coax a tree line seaward (Bennett, 2010), illustrating *how* they participate in distributed assemblages.

Archeologist Malafouris postulates a 'dynamic tension that characterizes the processes of material engagement, sometimes it is the thing that becomes the extension of the person. At other times, it is the person that becomes the extension of the material agent. There are no fixed agentive roles in this game; there is a constant struggle toward a "maximum grip" '(Malafouris, 2014, p. 147). In Bennett's *distributed assemblage,* each element contributes its own particular agency to the overall 'shi' of the assemblage, but ultimately the assemblage combines the agency of all in human and non-human confederations. She says 'There are…always a swarm of vitalities at play. The task becomes to identify the contours of the swarm and the kind of relations that obtain between its bits' (Bennett, 2010, pp. 31-32). The relations emerge from the affordances of the discrete elements or, as Tim Ingold puts it, the mutual connections between things based on their material form and material potential (Ingold, 2000). In an assemblage, those connections change along with the elements of its composition. Archeologist Ian Hodder maintains that there is also, 'a tangled stickiness – a dependency in the sense of an unequal and constraining force. Things and their interactions only afford certain types of behavior. Given certain goals, some things are more key than others. Different things have unequal performance characteristics, different potentials' (Hodder, 2012, pp. 57-8).

Bennett, Hodder, Ingold and Malfouris approach the human-material connection from different perspectives, but share a common goal, to 'rattle the adamantine chain that has bound materiality to inert substance and that has placed the organic across a chasm from the inorganic' (Bennett, 2010, p. 57). In Bennett's formulation of distributed agency, the assemblage itself is agentic. In one sense, I argue for ship agency as an intrinsic quality, but I do not argue that all manner of ship participation in political assemblage is agentic. The ship can, for example, be a setting for political action wherein the built environment is more stage than participant, a stage that possesses the affordances of ships. Nor are these modes of participation mutually exclusive. A ship can be a setting *and* participate in the action with agentic qualities.

If it is true, as Hasty and Peters suggest, that studies of ships raise new relational geometries as humans refract less agency back onto nature,' (Hasty and Peters, 2012, p. 670) then how might it be the case that ships refract agency back onto humans?

The Lively Materiality of Ships

The *Northland* is not approached as a metaphor, a memory or a literary device, but rather as an entity having once possessed 'obdurate objecthood' of a nature specific to ships' (Dunston, 2007, p. 11). Indeed, there is no refuting that the reified angles of a ship[11] are composed into physical objects. The shipwright translates functional requirements into the design of a particular vessel. Materials are cut, shaped, bent and fixed into structures that (mostly) translate their drawings and blueprints into form. The assembly of steel, wood, rope, canvas, brass, anchor and armament in a shipyard bring those angles into being. The sight line from deck to weapon to target, the sailor's plain pine berths packed tight with bunks and lockers, the captain's mess outlined in polished brass, the pilot house optimized for vigilance and control. Thousands of angles are constructed in the process of shipbuilding. As it takes shape in the boatyard, assembled by labor and machinery, plans are modified to reflect oversights, design flaws and economic constraints. The resultant structure, cradled in its dry dock, is unique. But it is not yet a ship - it is a duck-out-of-water. It is the moment of launch, when the dry-docked structure slides off the cradle, down the channel and into the seaway, which signifies its metamorphosis from structure to ship.

As with other vessels of its size and shape, the dramatic interplay of gravity, speed, and splash preceded the buoyancy through which the partially submerged vessel US Coast Guard Cutter *Northland* surfaced and righted itself at the Newport News Shipyard in Virginia in 1927. In the process, its ship shape was deformed in contact

[11] There are multiple opinions as to what determines a 'ship' vs. a 'boat.' A ship can carry a boat, but not visa-versa. A boat's work is carried out on deck, while a ship's mission is carried out below decks. For the purposes of this work, a ship is a vessel that is designed for operations in large bodies of water (i.e. seas and oceans).

with the water and the ship in turn, deformed the water. The floating structure became united with purpose as the water animated the vessel through sea motion. Ship dynamics expressed via vital materiality predicated on water, on floatation, vitality that endures from the moment the ship descends into water to the moment of irrevocable exit from it, signifying the death of the vessel. Afterwards, the ship may disappear from view, persisting only as an idea or a memory in an ephemeral absent presence, as Gregson, Crang and Watkins demonstrate in their work on memorialization of the USS *Canopus* and its souvenir value to those who served on it (2011). Ships may surface in popular imagination such as accounts of the whale-stricken *Essex*, fictionalized as the *Pequod* by Herman Melville in the novel '*Moby Dick*.' Or in displaced fragments, such as the *Northland's* ship's wheel exhibited in the Israeli Naval Museum in Haifa, or in tangible references at memorial sites in Tel Aviv. Atlit and Cesearea in Israel. The following section covers key aspects of how ship forms cope with the water world and the terminology used by naval architects to describe those capabilities. These affordances are key to understanding the agency of ships within assemblages at times when the ship as an element is critically engaged with the sea.

The structural composition of the ship is central to its design and composed of four categories of structural units: plating, panels, frameworks and fittings. Materials used in shipbuilding, such as steel, have affordances and constraints. Their manufacturing processes inevitably include weaknesses; for example, stress fractures in steel making, which are further exacerbated by construction techniques of molding and welding. The weaknesses produced are known as 'discontinuities.' Further discontinuities are produced through usage: fractures, deformations, material fatigue and erosion. The deformations referred to earlier also result in elastic fatigue. The statistical life expectancy of a ship is 20 million cycles (of sea motion) over its lifetime, a consequence of design, materials and usage. These are some of the most fundamental aspects of ship design that apply to all vessels. Of the *Northland*, it was once said, "She rolled deeply, due to the top weight of her heavy steel masts and spars and the absence of bilge keels' (Johnson, 1987, p. 113).

Design requirements for seakeeping and seaworthiness distinguish naval from land-based architecture. Anthony Molland's maritime engineering reference book defines *sea-keeping* as the ability of a vessel to withstand rough conditions at sea

(Molland, 2008, p.140). We tend to perceive a ship as a solid object, deformed only by incursion or decay, but a ship's shape is constantly deformed by the water it moves through, and, in turn, it reshapes the liquid below. And though propulsion is seen as a forward motion, 'A ship in a seaway is an elastic body which enjoys bodily movements in all six directions and distorts about and along all three axes. 'A ship in the water may surge' (Molland, 2008, p. 140).

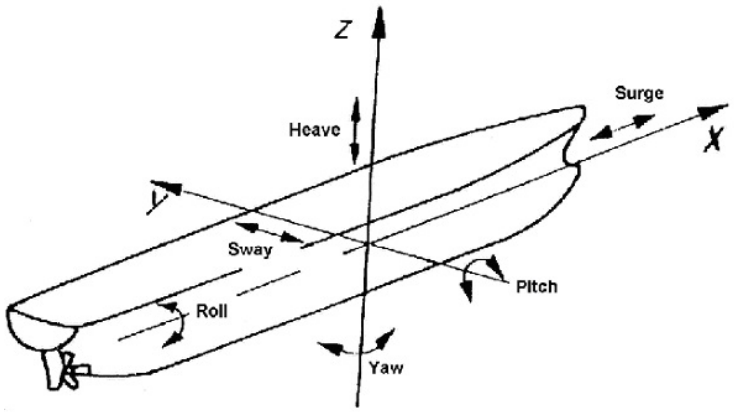


Figure 5. Six Degree of Freedom of Ships.
Source: Abdelkader Mohamed Djebli,
Université des Sciences et de la Technologie d'Oran Mohamed Boudiaf, Département de Génie Maritime.

Each motion emerges from the convergence of ship with waves of varying amplitude and direction. 'Ship motions are defined as, in engineering terms, as movements of the centre of gravity of the ship and rotations about a set of orthogonal axes - space axes moving with the mean forward speed of the ship but otherwise fixed in space' (Molland, 2008, p. 486). Hydrostatic and hydrodynamic principles ensure floatation (recall Archimedes' principle) and manage water flow respectively. A ship, when encountering wave forces, will seek hydrostatic equilibrium - that is, it will attempt to right itself when pushed off its center of gravity by sea motion. But at parametric roll resonance, that is when both ship and sea oscillate in a non-linear large roll motion, the ship is in danger of capsizing (Molland, 2008, p. 142). Author Nathan Philbrick describes the whaleship Essex as immersed in just such a situation.

'The waves were huge, the giant crest atomized into foam by the shrieking wind. The boats became unmanageable in the immense waves…rising to a fearful

height…and every wave that came looked as if it must be the last that would be necessary for our destruction' (Philbrick, 2001, p. 2). Mathematical formulas, statistical analysis and experimental design and testing use virtual and physical ship models to predict and refine ship behavior under multiple conditions. But the composition of sea movement is infinite, and models must isolate specific variables and test under artificial conditions. Marine architects devise technological approaches to handling sea conditions but cannot, at this juncture, predict or subdue them. They create ship structures that act and react to the challenges of the maritime realm. The qualities of sea-keeping and seaworthiness are one measure of their success. They also provide a way to better understand ship-power.

A ship seeks equilibrium, that is, it attempts to right itself without human intervention. Discernable in this effort is a vibrant materiality with an agentic quality that is usually successful under normal sea conditions. But not always. Extreme sea conditions can result in a catastrophic roll of the kind we are familiar with through narratives such as described in *The Perfect Storm* in which two of the crew are caught up and flung about in the ship's roll in a vicious storm, 'penduluming in and out with the roll of the ship until the deck crew can catch them at the rail' (Junger, 2009, p. 199). In these ship-sea encounters, we can also see a certain type of 'ship mobility' which moves along the physical axes of the ship; a mobility that on occasion breaks free of human intervention and is neither 'mobilities of ships nor shipped mobilities' (Anim-Addo *et al.,* 2014). The sea then tests the ship's sea-keeping capacities. 'A ship's master can apply his knowledge of ship and sea, position the angles of the ship to the waves and use speed to counter sea forces, but the unpredictability of those forces is subject to what engineer Molland describes as 'the random nature of the sea surface in which the ship operates' (Molland, 2008, p. 486). The fate of vessel, crew, passengers and cargo is subject to the ability of the ship to cope with conditions and must rely on its 'seaworthiness'.

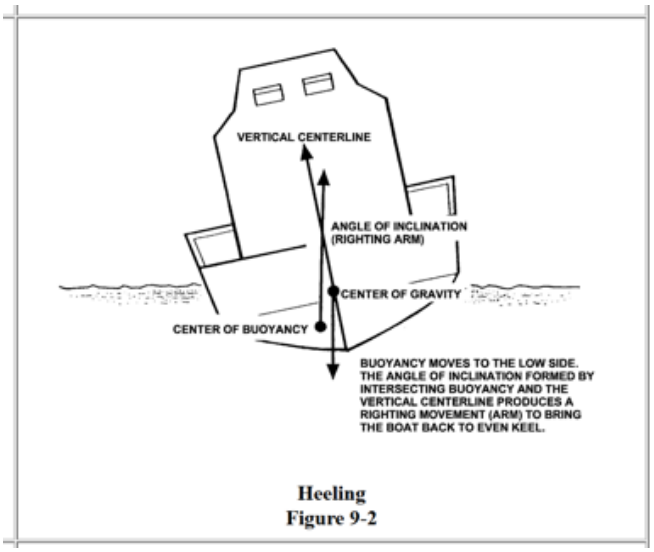


Figure 6. Righting movement.
Source: United States Coast Guard, 2018.

'Wetness' is a second sea-keeping concern of marine architecture; how the ship creates and handles spray produced when the relative movement of the bow and local wave surface becomes too great and water is shipped over the forecastle or driven over the forward portion of the ship by the wind. In cold conditions, the spray may cause ice accretion. Accounts of water washing over the decks of one of the Radio Caroline ships suggests that the freeboard (the distance between water line and deck) was too low for sea conditions, allowing waves to wash over its decks. A higher freeboard would have minimized that effect (Peters, 2014). The sea must also flow out. The number and position of scuppers (deck drains) determines the rate at which the water is dispersed from the deck and back into the sea. Naval architecture, like terrestrial architecture, creates spatial organization as well as ship dynamics. Understanding ship dynamics is essential to understanding the essential sea handling nature of ships and thus one of the most fundamental of ways in which they participate in sea-shaped assemblages.

SHIPBOARD BUILT ENVIRONMENT: SPACE AND PLACE

Dovey asserts that, 'The built environment frames everyday life by offering certain spaces for programmed action, while closing other possibilities' (Dovey, 1999, p. 11). A point supported by Kado's observation that 'Naval architecture is an enabling factor in that ships contain both surveillable and un-surveillable areas' (Kado, 2017, p. 6). Spatial organization 'mediates relations between insiders and visitors, the depth to which visitors are permitted to penetrate into the structure' (Dovey, 1991, p. 221). For example, foregrounding the empirical work, Alaska Natives were permitted to eat and sleep on deck, but were restricted from the interior of the ship except in cases of illness in which case they were allowed in the sick bay. In Bayonne, France the Hagana refit the ship and creatively modified spaces deep in the bowels of the ship to hide documents, weapons, cash and people from British detection. And a ship, which is quite literally a *vessel* that contains things, flora, fauna and humans, is bounded by water which mediates ingress and egress. As Ravi Ahaja writes regarding the SS *Gandhara* incident in 1930, it is 'that constricted and inescapable space itself' (Ahaja, 2012, p. 78).

Ship-space and ship-place is a common theme in recent geographical scholarship. William Walters engages with vessels and vehicles as sites that offer new perspectives on political struggle, and can themselves be ripe for investigation in their own right, particularly with respect to immigration politics (Walters, 2015). Interpreted as marginal places, they tell us about the challenges of state control in waters outside the limits of state authority (Peters, 2011). Seen as domesticated space as in James Ryan's study of Lady Brassey's home on the water, the *Sunbeam*, they tell us something about creating floating domesticated place (Ryan, 2006). Interrogated as spaces of identity production, spaces on ships produced slaves and unbound pirates (Rediker, 2007; Hasty, 2014). And the mobility of ships is central to understanding the role of ships in the production of geographical knowledge (Laloe 2014) and potential for escaping detection (Peters, 2012).

Place at a basic level is space invested with meaning in the context of power, which happens at all scales (Cresswell, 2014, p. 19). At the scale of a ship such as the

Northland, a vessel may be primarily a setting or stage for political action, as Walters suggests in his concept viapolitics. He proposes we delve more deeply into '…vehicles as settings for political disagreement' because 'the ship and the road, as well as the agora, have provided the locus for problematizations of the human and for the possibility of politics' (Walters, 2015, p. 473). Kimberley Peters' analysis of Pirate Radio Caroline ships as contested and marginal places provides one example (Peters, 2011). Walter's argument is composed of three theses:

1. The study of migration politics should examine how vehicles feature in the public mediation of migration and border controversies.
2. It is important to analyze vehicles as mobile sites of power and contestation in their own right.
3. An understanding of the materiality of transportation helps to explain how the vehicle can sometimes become a site of strategic political action.

Yet in one vital respect, I believe Walter's vision of *viapolitics* does not go far enough. To be adequate to this task, *Viapolitics* must also embrace the materiality of vessels and vehicles. While Walters does recommend that, 'a viapolitics should…aim for an account of migration that is much thicker with things and their entanglements with humans,' he keeps his distance from embracing what that 'thicker with things' implies must entail (Walters, 2015, p. 475).

LIVELY MATERIALITY

> *'A boat is the hardest thing I know of to put in perspective. It is so much like a human figure, there is something alive about it'.*
>
> - Thomas Eakins in Kirkpatrick, 2006, p. 37.

How is a boat alive? Bennett suggests we begin with an open mind. 'We need to cultivate a bit of anthropomorphism—the idea that human agency has some echoes in nonhuman nature—to counter the narcissism of humans in charge of the world' (Bennett, 2010, p. 22). I argue that ships, like the vibrant materiality of Bennett's agency-possessing tree-shifting worms and oscillating power grid, are not merely compliant dance partners in distributed assemblages, but can be both participants and actants. I suggest the origin of ships' vibrant materiality is ontologically innate. That is to say, it is constituted from the foundational characteristics of boats and

ships discussed above and then ship form merges with waters that carry and at times trouble it; the sea being '…something with a lively and energetic materiality of its own' (Lambert *et al*., 2006, p. 482). This generic liveliness is further refined by individuated ship character produced by the specific design, construction, condition and operational context of a given vessel. So, any ship can be vibrant, and a specific ship will be vibrant in its unique way. I suggest we might consider a specifically nautical form of 'thing-ness,' which I term 'ship-ness,' and 'ship-power,' as the corollary of Bennett's 'thing-power.' Thing-power, Bennett defines as '…the strange ability of ordinary man-made items to exceed their status as objects and to manifest traces of independence of aliveness' (Bennett, 2010, p. xvi). The corollary, ship-power, is aliveness made manifest by ship dynamics, sea handling and seaworthiness.

This vibrancy is rarely expressed independent from human interaction; it is in the interaction with sailors that the ship truly comes alive in that 'intricate human and non-human intricate dance' (Bennett, 2010, p. 313). How is a ship a partner in that dance? The maritime tradition of anthropomorphizing ships such as referring to a vessel as 'she' is not purely romantic. The search for perspective on the vibrant materiality in ships requires further theoretical framing. When writer John McPhee found a berth on a cargo ship, he sailed on it for months as he sought to understand the relationship between humans, ships and the sea. One evening, he and the captain were discussing the character of ships, and he wrote down the following comment from the captain:

> *'When I put my hand on a rail and think that I am associated with a living thing, and that I cannot only control it but that I have something going with it, we understand each other. It isn't all me taking and her giving. We work as a unit. I talk things over with her, I almost ask her, 'Hey, can we do this?' I am not just demanding what this ship can do for me, I'm asking what I can do for her. Look old girl, you're in trouble. Let's see if we can help each other'.*
>
> – John McPhee, 1990, P. 59.

This quote beautifully illustrates seafarer anthropomorphism and supports archaeologist Ian Hodder's argument that 'the behavior of things, plants and animals traps humans into various forms of care', a condition that Hodder terms as 'entanglement' (Hodder, 2012, p. 85), an assertion similar to Roy Ellen's comment that a ship has an 'ambiguity of agency relationship between control of object by people and people by an object' (Roy Ellen, 1988, pp. 219-29). But is this agency?

When and how is agency constituted and manifest in the world? (Malafouris, 2014, p. 51).

An answer may be found in the ways humans 'think through things' and are '*entangled* with them' as theorized in archaeology in Ian Hodder's theory of human/material entanglement and Lambros Malafouris' theory of material engagement (Hodder, 2012). Archaeologist Lambros Malafouris redirects the question of agency. 'If there is such a thing as human agency' he says, 'then there is material agency; there is no way human and material agency can be disentangled…they are the properties of material engagement' (Malafouris, 2014, p. 119). So, 'The important question is not 'What is agency?' The important question is, rather, 'When and how is agency constituted and manifest in the world?' (Malafouris, 2014, p. 147). One aspect of ship agency is a capacity to surface affordances - the connections between vibrant materiality, space and assemblage to make certain ship-sea political relations possible.

AFFORDANCES

The original relational concept of affordance was developed by sociologist Gibson (1979) to describe the 'action possibilities' that a given environment presents an animal. A ball, for example, affords certain possibilities and prevents others when handled by a child. Hutchby built on Gibson's ideas to recognize that affordances are based on the materiality of the artifact (Hutchby, 193). More recently, sociologists have considered the affordances of technological objects, and argue that we need to talk about '*how* and, importantly, *when* specific action possibilities emerge out of the ever-changing relations between people, between objects, and between people and objects.' They suggest we ask, '…how and under what circumstances particular affordances are made present and actions made available or unavailable to specific actors in particular settings?' (Bloomfield *et al*., 1991, p. 420).

The empirical evidence covered in Chapters 3 and 4 surface ship affordances via various forms within the assemblages of the Bering Sea Patrol and the Aliyah Bet project. A ship's form and character are malleable, reflecting adaptations to

structure and equipment, changes to condition, transfer of ownership and registration, and altered operational use. These elements together comprise the 'configuration' of a ship at a given point in time. Hasty describes the pirate ship as 'an inherently mutable entity,' and asserts that '…any exploration of the mobilities and spatialities of ships needs to reckon with the fact that many ships are mutable rather than immutable mobiles' (Hasty, 2014, p. 356). For Hasty, the act of piracy was in the first order, 'a material manoeuvre' (Hasty, 2014, p. 364). McFarlane and Anderson refer to thinking with as being…about the play between stability and change, order and disruption' (McFarlane & Anderson, 2011, p. 162). Over time, a vessel may be altered in a multiplicity of ways, layers of paint upon paint, pentimento building up its ship contours inside and outside.

Ships are prima facie mobile entities. They are '… are motionful not only in terms of their routes or the transnational mobilities of those working aboard, but in respect to their motion upon a fluid, moving surface - the sea' (Hasty & Peters, 2012, p. 669). While it is true a ship is not always at sea, to be a ship is to be at minimum floating on water, and to be on water is to be in motion. As Hasty notes, '…ships were (and are) inherently physical and dynamic, lived and contested sites of multiple mobilities' (Hasty, 2014, p. 352), an argument Steinberg agrees with, describing 'the ocean as…a space that is constituted by and constitutive of movement' (Steinberg 2013, p. 165). Ship mobility is implicated in the regulatory, environmental, architectural and relational geographies of ship navigation, both with respect to that which lies beyond the hull and that which resides within and on it.

Nautical geographies take advantage of Doreen Massey's observation that 'geography…has the potential to cross human and natural sciences' (Massey *et al*., 2009, p. 403). The ‘action possibilities’ of ships are both enabled and constrained by the maritime context that is their natural sphere of operations. 'Clearly there is potential to consider how through the specific context of the ship, which is governed by particular discrete laws, other political affects might be engineered, in terms of behaviors onboard (through ship architecture) or between vessels through acts of communication or surveillance' (Hasty & Peters, 2012, p. 669). Here, I think of the affordance as an ability to operate within the oceanic and liminal environment of natural elements (rocks, harbors, currents, weather patterns, tides), human constructed infrastructure (ports, aids to navigation), the legal and regulatory

framework that govern ship movement (delineation of water boundaries, naval or civilian identity, definitions of piracy, designated shipping channels), and the social practices of seafaring (drills, watches, ranks, navigation). Indeed, the natural maritime environment is inseparable from the social construction of the ocean, what Phil Steinberg describes as 'a constant negotiation between 'spaces of representation' implied and reproduced by users of the sea and the 'spatial practices' (Steinberg, 2001, p. 158).

The theoretical frame described above supports what is a highly empirical project. It is used to organize and interpret the empirical evidence to reveal ways in which a single ship's biography can source valuable understandings of the participative modes of ships in political power geometries. That is, the 'how' and the 'when' of ships as players in human political relations. I argue that ships surface a set of affordances that unite its role in an assemblage with place making and a scientifically 'grounded' vibrant materiality. At times, a ship may even act with agentic 'thing-power' within a distributed assemblage,' a confederation in which 'thing-power' allows for 'the agentic contributions of non-human forces' within heterogeneous assemblages (Bennett, 2010, p. xvi).

The *Northland* was entangled in power relations in both Territorial Alaska and British-Mandate Palestine in different ways, as the evidence in Chapters 3 & 4 will show. Doreen Massey's formulation of 'power geometries' was developed for an urban context where power is described as 'meeting and weaving at a particular local,' but her ideas about power as fluid and dynamic translate well to the 'material conditions and praxis of the maritime world' (Blum, 2010, p. 670). For Massey, 'You have to accept the implication of the local in the construction of the global' (Massey, 2005, p. 9).

Ships appear paler in greater distance and in more distant time. The *Northland* was sent to Italy to be scrapped in 1963, no trace of it remains intact anywhere. How to 'know' it is a methodological challenge. In the next chapter, I describe the methodology I designed for this project, and the mixed-methods used to execute the methodology.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

In this thesis, the research questions are addressed via an intimate investigation of one ship and how the biography, angles and ship-spaces of that vessel were enrolled in contrasting power geometries, moments when multiple dimensions of 'power over' and 'power to' overlapped, looped and converged on its ship-spaces. Power to exert control in Territorial Alaska also manifested empowerment through mediation and mitigation. Mossad's Aliyah Bet's nautical manifestation of power through the capacity to 'imagine, construct, and inhabit' an alternative future to the British-Mandate (Dovey, 1999, p. 9) but that future required power over others (Great Britain and the Arab population) to be achieved. 'These two forms of power' as Dovey notes, 'are reciprocal'' (Dovey, 1999, p. 9).

The ship is an elusive subject. In the first context it was an overt, snow-white embodiment of federal power operating in the vast open and nearly uncharted waters of Arctic Territorial Alaska. In the second, it was a covert enigma operating in a post-war maritime shadow theatre in conflict with a waning colonial power.

From the biographical narrative, two episodes emerge with scope for substantial analysis: The *Northland's* service in Alaska under the US Coast Guard (1927-1938) and its acquisition and operations as a clandestine refugee ship (1946-1947) under the Hagana. I focus on these two episodes for several reasons. First, while not a comparative study, the *Northland* presents an unusual opportunity to investigate a single ship and its ship-spaces in highly contrasting contexts. Massey says, 'To travel between places is to move between collections of trajectories' (Massey, 2012, p. 130).

Second, there is a great deal of archival material available for these two chapters in the ship's biography, whereas there is less material for the war-time service and access to material regarding the ship's service in the Israeli Navy is restricted. Finally, a broader focus would have resulted in a less-detailed investigation of specific moments and diluted the results of the research.

Both of these episodes were deeply political and yet nuanced, a factor underscored by the diverse sources and sufficient evidence available for each phase. The first empirical episode concerns the vessel's original operational use, the seasonal extension of government jurisdiction and services into remote coastal Territorial Alaska. When war broke out in Europe, the *Northland* was seconded to the US Navy in the North Atlantic. After the war, battered by ice and surplus to requirements, it was stripped of armaments and equipment and sold for scrap. The second analytic episode follows the ship as it became entangled in the struggle between the Hagana and the British government over limitations on Jewish post-war immigration from Europe to Palestine under the British-Mandate. Less than a year later, after the State of Israel was declared, it became the first Israeli warship, then a training vessel, demoted to a floating barracks and finally, in 1963, the *Northland* was truly scrapped. However, it continues to persist as a presence in the archives and in the imaginations of those who knew it or knew of it.

Within each of the two key analytic episodes, I use criteria developed in Event Ecology[12] derived from the approach of American Pragmatists, most prominently Alfred North Whitehead as interpreted by geographer Tom Roberts (Roberts, 2014). Using this process, I identified multiple events, or 'pauses,' for analysis by which to understand the participation and agency of materiality and ship-space, working outwards from the micro-geographical angles of ship-spaces more broadly into contemporary geo-politics. For locating and identifying ship agency, abductive reasoning may provide pointers for further inquiry. 'Abductive reasoning projects the properties of the familiar onto the unfamiliar. If the abduction leads somewhere and affects your initial problem, it is worthy of being pursued further' (Malafouris, 2014, p. 134). Also drawing from Massey's thinking in 'For Space', this approach also leverages her ideas about '… the event of place, in part in the simple sense of the coming together of the previously unrelated, a constellation of processes rather than a thing' (Massey 2012, p. 141). In the ship, we can see that, 'The nonhuman has its trajectories also and the event of place demands, no less than with the human, a politics of negotiation' (Massey 2012, p. 160).

[12] The term 'event ecology' is used, as ecologists were some of the first researchers to apply Whitehead's theory to understanding the causes of fisheries decline in the Pacific Northwest.

In conjunction with archival sources (supplemented with limited interviews and site visits), I employ several novel creative methods to explore the materiality and geometries of the ship and these pauses. I worked with engineering drawings and used scale model building to develop an intimacy with ship-spaces not accessible through textual or visual methods. The challenges and insights developed through these experiences are recorded in a 'making' journal, excerpts of which are included in this thesis. A cartographic exercise imagines, based on evidence, the ship's location at the point of each pause through the production of a ship's track map for each pause.

Ships affordances differ from those of geographically fixed materials. Ships are intrinsically contained spaces, both container and contained (Martin, 2016). In contrast with buildings, their hulls serve as a kind of mobile yet stable foundation, while the superstructure and above/below deck build-out shifts over time to reflect the behaviors and purposes of their owners, and of course, the effects of the environment. Their very mobility affords an opportunity to hold one dimension of study steady, the ship itself, while considering a wealth of human, animal and object interactions over time and geographical space.

This research design focuses on one historical case study that affords multiple distinctive opportunities for analysis given the *Northland's* highly differentiated biographical episodes. Yet the integrity of the ship's fundamental architectural materiality provides a stable analytical research surface using changes in operational use and geographical location. Drawing on literature from cultural studies, historical and cultural geographies and archeology for guidance, I have constructed an object biography of the ship from multiple archival sources in the US, UK and Israel, using documentary, visual and audio evidence. The biography is not an objective, but a strategic staging ground used to determine which episodes to select for analysis. The biography also serves the purpose of drawing, throughout this thesis, the biography is the 'red thread,' an evidential line drawn from birth to death that connects this specific vessel's materiality and angles from one time-space to the next.

This methodology produced several important findings. First, power geometries at the heart of this thesis operate in unique ways on ships and visa-versa. Second, that the vibrant materialities of a ship are critical participants in moments of deep political struggle via materials that may be transformed or adapted in the process. And finally, that evident within the frame of these two episodes, power relationships are mediated by the ship and nuanced, even when highly asymmetrical.

The remainder of this chapter covers the key methods used in this mixed-methods project. They include the selection of a single case-study (*Northland*); the (re)construction of biographical episodes from the case study subject using primarily archival materials sourced from multiple archives in Israel, the UK and USA. The small stories which are approached as key analytical events within each episode. And the creative 'doing' methods that supplement the core research methods.

A Singular Case Study

Why might this singular vessel, USCG *Northland*, provide not just an appropriate, but fascinating case study for this research project? The answer lies in the general affordances of ships as discussed in the first chapter, but also in the specifics of its biography. This ship in particular has a fascinating biography that provides a rich trove of evidence in contrasting episodes. As one history of the Israeli Navy title suggests (Tzalel, 2000) 'From Ice-breaker to Missile Boat' the ship was a shape-shifter.

The icebreaker USCG *Northland* was purpose built in 1927 to serve as a floating government in the coastal waters and places of the territory of Alaska between 1927 and 1933. During each season's voyage it carried law enforcement personnel and was the site of a floating court room; delivered medical personnel, mail, fuel and cargo; escorted teachers to remote villages; conducted search and rescue operations for whalers and sealers; supplied light house stations and conducted scientific studies. After leaving Alaska, the ship was decommissioned and refitted for American explorer Admiral Richard E. Byrd, Jr.'s second expedition to Antarctica. But war intervened and instead it was again commissioned to the Coast Guard and

seconded to the US Navy for service in WWII in Greenland. Its initial mission was to survey the inlets and fjords and detect and eliminate German communications installations. Once the US officially entered the war, the ship became the HQ of the area commander and actively engaged in battles, rescues and continuing reconnaissance.

After the war, it patrolled the coast of New York state on weather watch for several months until it was sold as scrap in 1947. The secretive buyers had no intention of scrapping the *Northland.* Instead, they sent the ship to Bayonne, France, to be refitted to carry thousands of passengers, as one ship of 63 that were part of the unauthorized immigration project known as 'Aliya Bet'. From France, it proceeded to Bulgaria and embarked nearly 2,700 Jewish refugees, crossed the Mediterranean and attempted to run the British blockade of Palestine. While just outside of Palestinian water, the ship now also known as *Medinat ha'Yehudim* (*The Jewish State*) was intercepted by four British Navy destroyers. Towed to Haifa, *Northland/Medinat ha'Yehudim's* passengers were deported to British detention camps in Cyprus with many of the crew hidden amongst them. After British withdrawal from Palestine, the ship was renamed *EILAT* A-16; the first warship in the newly declared nation-state of Israel. *EILAT* saw immediate action with Egypt in the conflict that followed the declaration of statehood. After serving as a warship, then a training ship and finally a floating barracks for the Israeli Navy, it was sold in 1963 to an Italian scrap yard. Before it departed, it was recognized with a state 'funeral' in recognition of its service to the country.

Shifts marked by operational, political, physical and geographical metamorphoses from 'birth' to 'death.' As a single case study, *Northland* cannot claim to represent how all ships are manifest with vibrant materiality and entangled in human political action and its consequences. As historian Mott Greene says, when discussing scientific biographies, 'A single life may be rich with vivid and absorbing detail, but it acquires meaning and importance only when it is folded into a narrative stronger than itself' (Greene, 2016, p. 730). *Northland's* biography, like that of a scientist, can serve as an exemplar to signpost how other vessels and perhaps vehicles participate in assemblages of power. And like biographies of human subjects, its macro story is made up of thousands of small stories enacted in shipboard places and populated by a wide range of participants both onboard and elsewhere. In effect, the one case

study is a collection of smaller studies. Each of those stories exposes moments that are ripe for analysis, whether the trajectories and the power relations they reveal are grand or diminutive in scale. The multiple methods described here enable the stories to emerge in the context of the ship's materiality, power relations in play and the environment in which it operated.

THE OBJECT BIOGRAPHY

> *'Objects can be seen to be active, but they are active in the manner of objects not in the manner of people'.*
>
> - Chris Gosden, 2005, p. 164.

As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, the object biography of the *Northland* pulls together the orderly and sequential 'facts' of the historical ship to provide a broad research surface from which to select episodes and within each episode multiple analytical moments I term *pauses*. These 'facts' are about dates (construction, commissioning, routes), places (ports, positions, locales) and events (adaptations, confrontations, resuscitations). Our understanding of 'biography' is closely tied to human biographies, and while the two are entangled, they are not equivalent. A biography is more than a linear reconstruction of the passage from birth to death, as Humphries and Smith (2014) state. Or as author Caroline Shenton proclaimed in a recent workshop, 'not one damn thing after another' (Shenton, 2017, Seminar).

Just as human biographies are multiple and entangled with things, objects have multiple lives and share our biographies (Humphries & Smith, 2014, p. 490). Indeed, 'It has also been acknowledged that an object biography may involve a series of lives and deaths as the object circulates through different social networks' (Joy in Gosden & Marshall, 1999, p. 169). Object biography as a research method is found in a number of complementary disciplines. The approach features prominently in work on commodity circulation by Appadurai and Kopytoff, particularly in their seminal collection *The Social Life of Things* (2013). Sociologists consider the 'biographies of everyday things and their meaningful associations to individuals through interviews' (Turkle, 2007) and object associations for cultures (Shallcross, 2011). In 'Things that

Talk', Lorraine Dunston brings together a set of essays examining how nine very different objects became important through a particular historical moment, 'when the match of this thing to that thought seemed irresistible' (Dunston, 2007, p. 24).

There are implications for how an object is selected for study and 'the process of remembering, forgetting and re-imagining the future through artifacts' (Humphries & Smith, 2014, p. 480). Or, as Dudley suggests, 'the entanglement of objects and collectors in webs of social relations, value and change, object biographies and the sometimes-conflicting stories that things come to represent, and the strategies used to reconstruct and retell the narratives of objects' (Dudley, *et al*., 2012, p. xvi).

As researchers, we too are entangled with the objects we study. In a sense, this project surrenders a portion of the research effort to that idea, while at the same time embracing Bennett's advice that there is, 'Something to be said for methodological naiveté for the postponement of a genealogical critique of objects'. The inclusion of creative methods follows her advice to, 'Admit a 'playful' element into one's thinking,' although in this case, it is 'doing' (Bennett, 1999, p. 17). Engaging with creative techniques engages researcher senses and imagination as a complement to more traditional research methods.

I sourced the bulk of the material to build *Northland's* biography from archives in the US, the UK and Israel. Triangulating the data from multiple sources has put lie to a number of 'facts' about the ship as represented in news articles, memoirs and ceremony scripts. It has been possible to triangulate between sources regarding the dates or sequences of events and to verify when adaptations to its materiality were carried out. Most memorable among the fact-checking incidents was being informed by the Director of the Pacific Northwest Coast Guard Museum in Seattle, Washington, that the USCG Cutter *Northland* was not the same ship as the one that ran the British Blockade of Palestine. 'There was no way that ship could have carried 3,000 people, he told me, a British fellow visited last year and explained there was a British passenger ferry called Northlands and that was the one they used' (Davis, 2014, Interview).

A heart-stopping moment was calmed by a side-by-side comparison of photographs from each episode that told me it could have been the same ship. It wasn't until I retrieved more photos from the Palmach archives that I could definitively assert that

it was the same ship. I created a visual analysis using the outboard profile drawings and three aspects of three versions of this same ship. Of course, in one sense, it was not *exactly* the same ship - so drastically had its condition deteriorated and shape-changing material modifications been made to her superstructure to accommodate so many people. This example underscores Gosden and Marshall's argument that 'The biographical lens recognizes that as people and objects move through time, they are constantly transformed, and these transformations of person and object are tied up together' (Gosden & Marshall, 1999, p. 169). I add that objects also move through space, bringing the object in line with Massey's conceptualization of place as constituted in space and time. 'Each of these time-spaces is relational. Each is constructed out of the articulation of trajectories' (Massey, 2012, p. 179). Given that, how does one determine which 'times' in an object's 'life' ought to be most closely examined? For this question, I turn to events, moments and pauses.

PAUSES, EVENTS, MOMENTS

The *Northland* was built in 1926 and scrapped in 1963. From those 37 years of its existence, I selected the two episodes of service in Alaska and Palestine to investigate in detail. These *episodes* are integral to the biography, in the sense of single parts belonging to a larger story (Cambridge Dictionary). During those combined 17 years in Alaska and Palestine, the ship was refitted numerous times, its condition maintained and deteriorated, ownership and personnel shifted, and operational purposes were diametrically opposed. Ship-spaces designed for one purpose were transformed into other kinds of places sometimes briefly but often those alterations were etched into the body of the ship. The maritime context in which it operated was unique in each case. Under the Coast Guard, the *Northland* broke ice, rescued ships and crews in distress, faced down illegal pelagic sea hunters, delivered medical and dental care as well as mail, teachers and priests to remote coastal villages and islands, conducted oceanographic and walrus surveys. Sails were raised, flags flown, masts cut down, armament added. The second (chronologically) episode was of shorter duration, in which a very different drama was compressed into shifting materiality and mission. Owned and directed by Hagana agents and operated by an American volunteer crew, it had only one objective, but to

accomplish it required massive material changes. If we accept that the ship, like other subjects, is in a constant state of 'becoming,' this moving object might appear as a blur. To focus on a blur is quite futile.

To address this challenge, I employed event analysis, following Walters and Vayda (2009). In this approach, the researcher selects a set of events, usually involving an identifiable change. These events ought to be describable, concrete and empirically measurable and seek to explain the 'why' of the event in terms of open-ended questions. They are vague on the criteria for inclusion, citing personal interest or academic curiosity about an identifiable phenomenon. I chose to use the archival material to identify events that were highlighted in the ship's logs, newspapers articles, memoires or official documents. Although this event ecology methodology described above does not fit perfectly within the frame of this work, it does provide some important guides.

First, the focus on specific events provides a bull's-eye from which to work outwards. This project takes the materiality of the ship-space as its methodological anchor so that working outwards in time, space and scale starting with events that took place on board serves to keep the ship at the core of the inquiry. Secondly, it resonates with human geographical approaches to the concept of space and production of place, thinking of Doreen Massey's simultaneous multiplicity of spaces producing social geometries of power and Yi-Fu Tuan's characterization of spaces as having areas and geometries whereas places are pauses in between spaces. Space moves, places are pauses. Finally, these events, which I refer to as 'pauses,' in the empirical chapter can be understood as 'small stories.' What Hayden Lorimer refers to as 'the shared biographical moment [revealed] through [sic] fragmentary records.' Lorimer argues that small stories 'tell of epistemic shifts on personal and intimate terms.' And demonstrate 'how we must be alert to the practice of geography as process, and more sensitive to its affective or emotive dimensions,' even when they are 'messy' or 'partial' (Lorimer, 2002, p. 203).

I used these three ideas to select specific pauses in the *Northland's* Alaska and Palestine service episodes and increase the intensity of discovery and analysis. My criteria for pause selection include an identifiable change - in materiality, location, maritime context, mission or persons commanding, passing or encountering the

ship. Using each of these discrete pauses, I interrogated the material from the archival sources to produce a series of small stories and maps that address the research objectives: discovering how ships surface affordances within distributed assemblages of political power in cases where political relations are fundamentally dependent on ship participation. Unpacking ship entanglement in assemblages that coalesce to exert and challenge power, particularly state authority. And investigate the ways and means by which a ship participates via its materiality in such assemblages. I augment the findings via creative practices that develop an interior, multi-dimensional experience of the *Northland's* spaces and places in absentia. They are covered in some depth in the next section, as they are uncommon methods in political geography and therefore require some explanation.

DOING METHODS

Contemporary human geographers have engaged with 'doing' methods for some time. They have walked paths (Sidaway, 2009); written creatively (DeLysler & Hawkins, 2014); videoed while hacking places (Garrett, 2012); tuned into sonic sensibilities and soundscapes (Stevenson and Holloway, 2016; Butler 2007); experienced the affect of ruins (McDonald, 2014; Edensor, 2005), and created photographic essays. Even the act of writing has been examined as a 'doing' within geographical practice (DeLyser & Hawkins, 2014). Harriet Hawkins, working at the intersection of humanities and geography, describes *doings* as 'the growing body of 'creative geographies' where geographers collaborate with artists and curators to make-work, carry out research, develop exhibitions or practice various different creative techniques' (Hawkins, 2011, p. 465). Clare Madge identifies an additional body of creative geographical work in which the geographer is the creative *geoartist*, enacting or creating geographically orientated aesthetic works themselves (Madge, 2014).

I included creative methods in this project as a complementary method to the core archival research. This is not a practice-based PhD. It is a practice-augmented project designed to explore one avenue to experience ship space when the ship in question is no longer materially present to be experienced. Of course, it is entirely possible to experience ship motion generically by taking a Thames Taxi or crossing the channel

on a ferry. *Cutty Sark* and *HMS Britain* visitor centers attempt to provide something of an individual ship encounter. At the former Atlit Camp near Tel Aviv, Clandestine Immigration Museum guides shepherd visitors into an immersive exhibit inside a partial ship designed to represent an Aliyah Bet experience on a non-specific vessel. Each of these examples represent one of the key challenges of representing a built environment - and that is to say 'when.'

Each pause, as described in the previous section, must find the ship in a different state than the others. John A. Tilley, a historian from East Carolina University, enumerated the obstacles he encountered when researching the configuration of the *Northland* during a particular incident during WWII in a letter to the Coast Guard Academy Museum Curator. His report was to be used to provide an artist with a historically accurate version of *Northland*. 'By 1941 the *Northland* had undergone considerable modification. I have had occasion to make two line drawings of her, one showing her as built and the other her 1944 configuration. At the times of the two incidents to be painted (September 1941 and December 1942) she did not, unfortunately, look like either of them' (Tilley, date unknown).[13] His challenge is my challenge, in so much as each pause corresponds to a configuration.

I have copies of the drawings to which Tilley referred, and Tilley's profile drawing. Two sources for them, the US Coast Guard Historian's Office in Washington, D.C., the PNW Coast Guard Museum in Seattle, Washington, represented these drawings as original engineering drawings. They are not, as evidenced in Tilley's letter. My copies of the original blueprints are far more faded and in one case, so dark as to be nearly illegible - a major contrast with copies of Tilley's immaculate outboard profiles. Tilley's ownership of these drawings solves an important mystery, wherein the review of the bid-document in the Naval Architecture Journal (cited in the Ship Chapter) makes no mention of a sailing rig, yet the 'Original Profile' shows a full Brigantine rig. The requirements for the sailing rig must have been included after the bid was let, meaning they were added at the behest of someone influential in the Coast Guard hierarchy and posed a potential risk to the ship's design integrity. Tilley's

[13] Tilly was hired by the Coast Guard to create painting of several cutters, including *Bear* and *Northland*. The report in the archives of the United States Coast Guard Historian's Office is undated.

drawing 'as built' is accurate but not 'as designed.' So where to begin to understand the pause correlated instances of ship-spaces of the *Northland*? Political geography has little experience with ship design. I chose to become acquainted with the ship via these drawings, while acknowledging that the design on the paper never exactly matches the built thing. Then by building exploratory models of ship and ship parts where that haptic experience could provide knowledge not easily acquired through other means.

By model making, I mean the creation of objects and creative works rather than mathematical or statistical modeling. For the purposes of this discussion, an object is a 'material thing that can be seen and touched' and a model is simply understood as 'a three-dimensional representation of a person or thing or of a proposed structure, typically on a smaller scale than the original' (Oxford Dictionary). Traditionally, the output of model making has been a physical object. However, new(ish) technologies enable researchers to produce digital three-dimensional (3D) representations, not covered in detail here. Manual and digital technologies can be combined in a multitude of ways to achieve a research objective. Model making as method, then, is the process of creating a scale model in physical and/or digital form from a reference object or objects in order to address research objectives.

Making models provides researchers with a method to investigate objects that are, for whatever reason, not materially accessible. They may no longer exist, are missing, or remote - a scrapped ship, a bulldozed building, a dismantled camp; objects that have yet to be, perhaps never will be, materialized; a proposed neighborhood center, a memorial statue or a border wall or objects that are not appropriate for direct investigation, for example fragile antique clothing. Whatever the object in question, it is worth considering how models can be used to develop deeper geographical knowledge of things, of spaces and places, of micro-geographies, and materials.

As Hayden Lorimer suggests in the context of historical geographies, we have a challenge in tracing ways of moving, feeling or performing *in the past* – how can we access haptic, sonic and kinaesthetic forms of experience and then consider the complex interplay between embodied experiences and the formation of geographical knowledge? (Lorimer, 2002). Physical model making can play a role in

bringing such traces into the present through re-imagining, re-creating things. Anthropologist Lambros Malafouris argues that our deeply rooted Cartesian visions and modes of thinking have drawn an artificial line between persons and things, although the way we think is the property of a hybrid assemblage of brains, bodies and things (Malafouris & Renfrew, 2014). The creative engineering of a model of an absent object engages the maker's brain and body with the thing that is missing and renders a form of the thing present once more. The model is itself an assemblage, one component of which is the researcher-maker's mind.

How geographers might approach model building a built environment will depend on theoretical interpretations of the role of architecture, space and places as well as how model-making fits within a methodological strategy. Examples of geographical approaches to built environments lean on other disciplines, including encoding of structures of power in built form through design and materials (Johnson, 1994; MacDonald, 2014); the agency of materials within the landscape (MacDonald, 2006); monuments and the development of imagined communities; materialization(s) of history (Harvey, 1996), power spatialized (Dovey, 1999), as complicit in locating, fixing and constricting people (Foucault, 1988); as a necessary relationship between consciousness and the structures of the material world (Williams, 1980, in Dovey, 1999) and as a primary form of discourse (Dovey, 1999). For vital materialists, it can develop an ability to discern non-human vitality, to become perceptually aware of the agency of things. Political theorist Jane Bennett argues for the agentic contributions of non-human forces, for the liveliness of the thing 'formerly known as object,' a phenomenon she terms 'thing-power' (Bennett, 2010).

The production of a model also shares an affinity with the production of art - what Harriet Hawkins characterizes as a site where 'new multi-dimensional knowledge and identities are constantly in the process of being formed' (Hawkins, 2011). They are formed by doing and creating. Matthew Paterson identifies a lacuna which lies between the bodily experience and the expression of it. *Haptic geographies* may address this gap by bridging it via the production of objects, which requires bodily touch in concert with the maker's imagination - an embodied experience of production in materializing the model (Paterson, 2009).

Models that are not materialized but exist in virtual modes are not divorced from bodily engagement. Digital models exist in bits, bytes and pixels on a screen but are not themselves completely products of the mind, as engagement with the software tools of production is a physical engagement. Practices such as augmented sculpting blur the line between digital and physical performance as computer-based sculpting applies analogues of the artists tools such as brush, canvas and chisel to the manual manipulation of physical material producing machine-mediated sculpture (Adzhiev *et al*., 2002). Other approaches may combine digital and physical model-making by prototyping in one mode and producing a finished product in the other. Which technologies to use or combine is, as with all research design decisions, dependent on the object(s) to be modeled, objectives of the researcher and constraints of the project.

These 'doing' methods are, at their heart, embodied explorations, reflective and creative that produce tactile knowledge that is of value to both researcher and audience. The researcher produces the model object, engages reflexively with that process and produces a potentially powerful artifact to inform and engage with others.

Making and Responding to Models

Interpreting the meaning of an object may be quite confounding, given we are situated not only in place and time, but in the midst of a multitude objects without which, as anthropologist Malafouris reminds us, we could not be human (Malafouris & Renfrew, 2014). Making objects with our own bodies, then, is a haptic route to understanding them *and ourselves* within an inevitably imaginative, reflexive and situated process. It is impossible to recreate the exact object, but the 'doing' of model-making engages with an object's properties in ways that observation, text, and image do not. The researcher's body is not a figurative bridge between world and being, but a literal, physical assembly as in Merleau-Ponty's postulate that the 'lived experience of the body in space is the primary relation from which all conceptions of space are constructed' (Merleau-Ponty in Dovey, 1999, p. 39). The kinaesthetic experience of making the thing is in turn transferred into what Jane

Bennett terms 'thing-power'- a vibrancy in the object generating a shift from object as subject to object as other, as when 'the sardine can talks back, the mute idol speaks, when the subject experiences the object as uncanny, rising from the depth towards our superficial knowledge' (Bennett, 2010, p. 2). The nature of the experience and the produced object is, of course, specific to the research subject, objectives, strategies, materials and ways of knowing and recording the process.

This last approach is the one I adopted, incorporating model-making as a method to explore the built environment of a ship that no longer exists by creating a series of models to explore the object of the ship as a place of state power, contestation and identity formation and its agency within that context. I focused on developing drawing and models of adaptations using primarily the manual and 3-D pen technologies described below. The planning and the execution were an iterative and reflexive process. My experience suggests that researchers will differently and more intimately comprehend the geometries, the spaces and the places of a built environment through the embodied process of model-making.

ARCHIVAL RESEARCH

> *'For archives do not simply arrive or emerge fully formed; nor are they innocent of struggles for power in either their creation or their interpretive applications. Though their own origins are often occluded and the exclusions on which they are premised often dimly understood, all archives come into being in and as history as a result of specific political, cultural, and socioeconomic pressures—pressures which leave traces and which render archives themselves artifacts of history.'*
>
> - Burton, 2006, p.6.

My archival research began with an initial exploration to locate sufficient evidence to argue for the viability of a single case study focus on this particular ship. 'Methods allow us to contextualize the 'research process or the researched subject and materials. Methods make the invisible work of historical research visible' (L'Eplattenier, 2009, p. 69). I began with the National Archives in Washington D.C., where I met with the maritime archivist who provided several unofficial but very helpful finding aids which he and his team had compiled on U.S. Naval history. They were accessible only from several desktop computers in the archivists' office. Some

materials were available in that office, and could be reviewed onsite without much formality. Other documents were available only in the formal reading room. That environment is very formal; request and check out procedures are spelled out and adhered to, and security is tight. I spent several days in those archives reviewing multiple volumes of *Northland's* clothbound original logbooks, each covering a six-month period. I skimmed the contents, and took several hundred photographs of particular pages; some because they had compelling entries and others because they indicated changes in location and command. I then visited the Pacific Northwest Coast Guard Museum that also houses an archive, far less formal than the former. Commander Davis, the museum's Director, pulled out numerous files and a set of blue prints. Again, I took photographs to capture those materials. I discuss both of these sites and materials in further detail in the preceding sections, but came away from my encounters and a review of the material I had captured assured that the ship had a rich and well documented history. I used that evidence to persuade my supervisors to permit me to substitute this project for my original proposed topic. It is fair to say, as well, that handling the ship's logbooks was an affective experience that transformed my understanding of archival work from a abstraction into a kind of compulsion. The discovery was tactile as well as intellectual. 'The appeal of archives is also inspired by the modern romance of dust: that ''immutable, obdurate set of beliefs about the material world, past and present''—whether emanating from the state or from a rag rug—which has its own passions, its own dramas, its own dreams' (Burton, referencing Steedman, 2006, p. 7).

As my research progressed and I assembled the biography of the ship, I became more aware how differentiated types of materials and data availability were related to the varied commands and its operational uses. The ship's operations in the Bering Sea Patrol were well recorded and accessible, in the ship's logbooks and formal reports. Its subsequent activities in the WWII North Atlantic are also, mostly, available in the form of logbooks and war-related documents which have been declassified. Both of those episodes were periods of 'above board' official service, and hence well documented in terms of naval-type recordkeeping. Of course, this is with reference to official sources in official archives in which it is critical to identify what is not recorded as well as to analyze the material that is available. For example, the Bering Sea Patrol Logbooks have entries for 'Notes of the Day,' but in cross-

referencing logbook dates with informal accounts it becomes obvious that many activities are not recorded in the logs either because they are not sanctioned or they are related to another aspect of the ship's service, such as the parallel duties of the Commander and First Lieutenant as Commissioner and Deputy Marshall law enforcement officers. In contrast, the purpose of its acquisition of the ship by a Zionist underground organization is reflected in a dearth of those sorts of official record keeping.

Typical assets such as logbooks, crew records, and engineering drawings for adaptations are unavailable in keeping with the clandestine nature of owner and operational use. Several trips to Israel were required to uncover material substantive enough to provide the archival evidence necessary for this analysis. For those first three biographical phases, there are multiple secondary sources available. *Northland's* final chapter as an Israeli naval vessel was, and remains, opaque. The Israeli Defense Force holds those materials, and I was unable to secure the contacts needed to access its archives while my archival work was ongoing I have since been introduced to resources who may be willing to help with information for a book project on *Northland*. There may also be more Hebrew language secondary sources available for the ship's final phase, but I am not a capable reader of Hebrew and had to rely on translations where available (this challenge will be discussed further below). I construct the object biography of *Northland* using archival sources in the United States, Israel and the United Kingdom, as well as online resources. I supplement primary sources with secondary sources including news items, memoirs, texts and books. Usually, my time on any given archival site was limited. The first day, I conduct an initial survey of what was available, selected a set of materials to record, and use my remaining time to record documents and photographs with a camera and specialized image capture software. When downloading the images, I rename them with the archive name and reference ID (if available). I also use the application OneNote (Microsoft) to make notes on each archive findings. I turn now to a discussion of my experiences vis-a-vis the process of archival research, the condition of the materials and the challenges I encountered during this phase of the project. It is organized in a chronological fashion with reference to the ship's history, not necessarily the order of research, beginning with researching the design and commission of the ship.

Origin Story: Design and Build

I approach this project with the assumption that every ship has a unique form and life-span trajectory, just as true of vessels as of humans. Thus, the particulars of its design and construction are an essential component of its object biography, That is - *how* is *this* ship an object beyond a superficial categorization as a ship? I sourced most of the materials that helped me understand, in layman's terms, the architecture and characteristics of *Northland* from the Pacific Northwest Coast Guard Museum, the [US] National Archives and several journal and newspaper articles. Pacific Northwest Coast Guard Museum is located on the secured Coast Guard Base on Pier 36 on the Seattle waterfront. To access it, I was required to make advance arrangements with Director Captain Gene Davis in advance so that the guards at the gate would permit me to pass onto the base. Once past the formal gatekeeper, the atmosphere was welcoming and informal. Davis and a museum volunteer gave me a brief tour of the one-room museum.

Then we passed through a doorway to sit down at a long chart table in the archive/work room, a large rectangular space filled with filing cabinets, rolled up nautical charts, Coast Guard memorabilia and framed photographs that covered all available wall space. Here, the two extracted a quantity of folders from multiple filing cabinets. From an open box of over-sized rolled-up papers, they extracted a set of engineering drawings for *Northland*, including those of the original configuration of the ship. Captain Davis told me I was the third person who'd contacted them in the last month about *Northland,* so they had the materials to hand when I came. One researcher was tracking down a painting, the other was writing the biography of the man who commanded it during WWII, known as 'Iceberg Smith'. I took extensive photos of the oversized drawings that measured about four feet by six feet. In hindsight, I realized I should have had copies made. Using Photoshop to reassemble the photos was a laborious task, but through the process I did become familiar with components of the ship via the process of matching edge to edge (I later rectified the situation with a second visit to the museum and acquiring high resolution scans necessitated by the requirements of scale model-making as a method). There was a kind of gift exchange between us, as I provided the Director to a film made on and

about *Northland* in the 1930's that they were not aware of. It was received with great enthusiasm and cemented my welcome that day and in the future. Later, as we rummaged in the basement where the as yet un-inventoried collections are stuffed in and on top of shelves and overflowing in cabinets, Davis emerged from a closet with a velvet cushion, embroidered with 'Alaska' and an assortment of symbols. It sits on my sofa as a daily reminder of that visit and this project. The drawings, or blueprints, have been the most significant material from this source, though I also obtained images of various magazine articles that were useful as secondary sources. I was unable to locate original specifications used in the bidding process, despite searching in the [US] National archives in Washington, D.C., the Coast Guard Historian's Office and sending a query to Newport News Shipyard, which won the bid and built the ship. This would prove to be one of the '…everyday disappointments that historians know they will always encounter there [in archives]' (Steedman, 2001, p. 1162).

However, I was able to locate a review of the bid documents in the *Journal of the American Society of Naval Engineers*, which provided useful information that described the innovations in the design in technical language (1926, pp. 343-446). I located a single report to Congress documenting its progress (United States Congress, 1924, Serial 8226). Several newspaper articles in the *New York Times,* accessible through the paper's online database/archive 'TimeMachine', lauded *Northland's* innovative, modern design and described the ship and equipment on board. These articles most likely were the result of Coast Guard press office releases, but given the dearth of other information proved helpful (*New York Times*, 12 June 1927, p. 19; 15 August 1927, p. 37). In the same sense that Innes Keighren states, newspapers can be, '…an invaluable source in recovering otherwise unrecorded voices' (Keighren, 2017, p. 662), they can also fill in 'the gaps and the cracks in their [the archival] narratives more clearly (Carminati, 2018, p. 38). As discussed further in the chapter 'Ship', at the British Maritime Museum in Greenwich's extensive library on nautical architecture, I consulted texts on naval architecture and historical ships to better understand and interpret the archival material, and the blueprints in particular. Finally, I sourced some photographs from the Newport News Maritime Museum documenting ship-building at the Newport News, Virginia Shipyard, where *Northland* was constructed. These provide insight into the landscape and scale of the shipyard.

The blueprints, also known as engineering drawings, provide detailed specifications for the ship (though the reified ship is never exactly what is specified) and include a list of change orders, signed by the naval architect in charge. Invaluable for their detail, they are a description of parts, deck-by-deck, view-by-view. A sense of the whole ship shape formed over time, as I collected close to a hundred photographs of *Northland* from many angles at different points in time and place.

- Pacific Northwest Coast Guard Museum: Collections of files and drawings related to the US Coast Guard Cutter *Northland* (no file identifiers).

Commission and Attachment

Following its construction, the ship was launched into the sea, commissioned into the U.S. Coast Guard service and attached to the Bering Sea Patrol, the operational mission for which it was built. The [U.S.] National Archives holds the original *Northland* ship's logbooks for the years 1927 through 1942 in its Maritime Collections (United States National Archives, Record Group 26. 26.3). Opening and paging through these constituted my first engagement with physical objects as primary source materials. On my first visit to the National Archives, I acquired a temporary reader card (they had run out of funds and could not provide standard cards), and gained access to the collection in the formal reading room. I was moved by the sheer mass of the books on the cart, the expansive scale of each worn, faded monthly record, noted the contrasting penmanship and extent of detail as recorded by individual writers (and learned that responsibility for logbook entries rested with the First Lieutenant). At that moment, I felt for the first time like a 'genuine researcher.'

As research material, logbooks have been used as primary sources for the relationship between ships and oceanic knowledge production, fisheries, and sea ice. Geographer Anne-Flore Laloë examines ship's tracks, as expressed through logs, and the charting of oceanic knowledge (Laloë, 2014, pp. 39-49); Margrett Schotte evaluates logbooks as expert records (Schotte, 2013, pp. 281-322); and they are analyzed to reconstruct sea-ice conditions in Hudson Bay using the logs dating back to 1751 in the Hudson Bay Company's archives. 'The evidence is taken from the

ostensibly reliable journals and log-books of sailing ship mariners whose livelihood and security depended upon highly acute perceptions of sea conditions' (Catchpole & Faurer, 1985, pp. 121- 8). Over time, working with these ship's logbooks and triangulating with other sources, I have come to understand that the entries may be highly accurate, but like the archives themselves, they fail to reflect many of the activities carried out on and by the ship due to regulations (they were not official coast guard duties) and perhaps to avoid oversight (engaging in grave robbing might not be a sanctioned activity). Nevertheless, these volumes were invaluable for tracing the initial commission and attachment history, as well as subsequent moments in *Northland's* history. Over the course of two visits, I used a camera to record over 1,000 pages and took care to capture pages from the maiden logbook that recorded the ship's commissioning, initial shake-down cruise to validate the ship's readiness for deployment, passage through the Panama Canal to the west coast of the United States and ultimately to Dutch Harbor (AKA 'Unalaska'), the site of the U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters in territorial Alaska, the location where the ship was officially attached to the Patrol and departed for its first seasonal cruise.

- [U.S.] National Archives Record Group 26, Records of the US Coast Guard; Entry (NC-31) 159A, Identifier 585454.

The Bering Sea Patrol

I used the ship's logbooks described above to understand regular routines such as drills and watches, who and what was being transported, how discipline was enforced as well as for position, location, weather, sea conditions and route data (headings). They also documented changes in command and for every seasonal cruise the start and end date of its attachment and detachment from the patrol. From that data, I developed a map of the ship-tracks of its first, truncated seasonal cruise. The logbooks are a critical primary source for the Alaska chapter, and their affordances and deficiencies are discussed in further detail in that section. The [U.S.] National Archives also holds a number of records related to the Bering Sea Patrol in their Sand Point (Seattle) facility (United States National Archives, NRIA-26-BERING) and USCG reports, manuals and reference material, all of which help to clarify the regulations, hierarchies and approach to governance within the service. The official scope of the patrol and the activities that were undertaken by *Northland*

specifically and its personnel became evident only when I worked in a number of archival sites.

The Alaska State Historical Collections in Juneau hold the official state archives and many other Alaska-specific historical collections. On my visit to Juneau (the state capitol) access to the archive itself was not possible, due to a two-year project entailing a complete reconstruction of the archive depository and reading room. The State Archivist, Anastasia Tarmann, was working out of the state library facility and despite the disruption, was very helpful given the nature of my research and their considerable holdings about *Northland* and the Bering Sea Patrol. Ms. Tarmann sent several finding aids in advance of my visit and arranged to have my document requests delivered to the library from the storage site. In addition to retrieving the documents I requested, she took the initiative to pull other files that turned out to be crucial, especially those of one of the ship's commanders, Commander F.A. Zeusler.

The breadth of his activities became clear as I went through his papers. For example, Zeusler undertook a 'sociological' survey in 1938 that covered a wide variety of topics such as walrus extinction, currents and the effects of liquor on native populations sent to many different types of respondents from village elders to schoolteachers. They survey report and individual respondent's returned questionnaires are in the collection. Zeusler's papers provide extensive insight into his personal views and are also a repository of information he collected both directly related to his duties but also to his great interest in the Arctic and Natives. They contain detailed reports on three years of Bering Sea Ice Patrols, personal cruise reports, correspondence between himself and his chain of command, but also with notable figures of the day - politicians, scientists, judges, etc. He oversaw a survey of disparate individuals in a variety of roles (elders, teachers, United States Marshals, business persons) across the annual cruise route which covered a perplexing range of topics from observable changes in currents to walrus extinction to the effects of liquor on native populations, the question of public vs. private running of general stores and how the Coast Guard could better serve these communities. He employed Native Alaskan Paul Soolik to assist in ethnographic studies of multiple villages for three years running and to document native myths, overseen by his First Lieutenant and himself. His papers figure prominently in this thesis, given both the wealth of

material and that he was the last to command the ship during this phase. The following collections from The Alaska State Historical Collections are key to my understanding both of the ship's activities and also the context in which it operated.

- MS 10: Kinky Bayers: Bayers was a Juneau character and scrapbooker extraordinaire, Spiral No. 16 contains documents, photographs, news clippings and ephemera related to ships and the navy in Alaska.
- MS 163: F.A. Zuesler: Zeusler was USCG Captain of *Northland* 1937-1938, and subsequently commander of the Bering Sea Patrol. The collection contains multiple boxes of reports, maps, letters and speeches.
- MS 105: Arnold Morton Papers: Morton was a young man who in 1937 left university early, promising his father to take his exams under the supervision of Commander Zeusler. He was an oceanography student who worked under Zeusler on *Northland's* 1937 cruise. The collection includes his hand-written journals that describe his activities, impressions of locales visited, others aboard the ship and his sketches of various people and places he encountered.
- PCA 90: Mollie Ward Greist Collection: Greist was a missionary nurse at Point Hope and Barrow, Alaska, from 1921 to 1937. Her collection contains several photograph albums with images of towns and villages, bush pilots, miners and events, such as 4th of July and Memorial Day celebrations.
- PCA 580: Chandler Hicks Photographs: Hicks was an airplane mechanic and pilot who worked in Alaska from 1927 to 1932. As with the Griest Collection, the Hicks Collection is comprised of photographs taken by Hicks, a young and enterprising bush pilot. Of particular interest are some of his aerial photographs that provide a different perspective than any of the other documentary sources I have consulted to date.
- Paul Soolik Collection within the Zeusler Collection MS163 Alaska State Historical Collections: Soolik was a Native Alaskan from Angoon who was employed by Zeusler to carry out sociological research on behalf of the USCG. The Zeusler Collection contains examples of Soolik's work, which remains mostly un-credited, a reflection of Soolik's status as a Native Alaska without advanced formal education. The relationship between Soolik and Zeusler is documented through letters (some of which are in the Soolik Collection at the Consortium Library and others in the Zeusler Collection). In the context where most of interactions between the USCG and Native Alaskans are narrated by white participants or through the lens of their camerad, the Soolik collection represents the richest primary source of a Native Alaskan perspective I have found to date.

Also while in Juneau, I attended a lunchtime lecture by an Alutiiq (Kodiak Island) Master Artist named Perry Eaton, at the Sealaska Center. In his lecture, he noted that there is not a single original object of native art and culture that remains on Kodiak Island. He and other native artists are recreating their culture using a combination of historical research on Kodiak native art objects kept in collections in Estonia,

France and Russia and modern tools and aesthetics. In one case, the discovery of a small-scale object, a kayak-type boat specific to Kodiak Island, was so detailed in both materials and construction that they are using it as a blueprint to build a full-scale version. This lecture planted the idea for model-making as method, discussed later in this chapter.

The **University of Alaska Anchorage and Alaska Pacific Consortium Library** holds the Alan G. May Collection. It is housed in the main library on the University of Alaska Anchorage campus in Alaska's largest city (population approximately 300,000). May was an Englishman who served in the British Army in WWI and then emigrated to the United States. Although an amateur archeologist, he spent three summer seasons on archeological digs as second-in-command of the 1936, 1937 and 1938 Smithsonian Archeological Expeditions under what he described as 'the cantankerous leadership of 'The Old Man' Dr. Ales Hrdlicka', the Dutchman who led the Institution's Anthropology Department. May was a meticulous diarist not only of the archeological digs that he participated in under the direction of the Smithsonian Institute, but also the sites and people he encountered, including the captain and crew of *Northland*, that transported May and his fellow researchers to Alaska, and brought them back to Seattle with their 'collections' which included not only native artifacts, but native bones.

- Alan G. May Collection HMC-0690 Series 1-4, Series 1: Boxes 5-9, 10-13, 1417; Series 2: Box 4; Series 3: Box 5; Series 4: Box 1.

With the exception of the Soolik papers, it proved difficult to build an understanding of the response of the indigenous people to the ship and its activities from archival sources. Only fragments of their voices are accessible, mostly through published native memoirs and biographies, such as that of *Sadie Brower Neakok* (Blackman, 1992), *Fifty Miles from Tomorrow* (Hensley, 2009), and *An Eskimo Life History from, the Arctic Circle of Alaska* (Bodfish, 1991). Other texts such as *Erinaput Unguvaniartut/So Our Voices Will Live* (Reardon & Fienup-Riordan, 2013) are derived from oral history projects at the Alaska Native Language Center of the University of Alaska. They provide translations of interviews that are helpful in gaining a Native Alaskan perspective on culture and locale. 'The respectability which oral history has gradually gained the past twenty five years, together with the emergent

phenomenon of the Internet-as-archive, has helped to prize open canonical notions of what counts as an archive and what role the provenance of historical artifacts of all kinds should play in History as a disciplinary project' (Burton, 2006, p. 3). These documents proved useful for context, but contain very few descriptions of encounters with the ships of the Bering Sea Patrol.

At the University of Alaska Fairbanks' **Museum of the North,** the archeology archivist invited me to handle a number of items that came from *Baychimo*, a ship at the center of one of the analytical pauses in the Territorial Alaska chapter. Perhaps it is a stretch to conceive of an archaeological collection as a research archive, yet another 'historical artifact of all kinds,' but I certainly found handling these objects to be as affective an experience as that first encounter with *Northland's* logbooks.

- Museum archeological Collection: *Baychimo* Accession 9/14.

The **Alaska Digital Archives** website provides online access to thousands of digitized assets from ten organizations including archives, museums and historical associations. This online resource was particularly useful for acquiring many photographic images of *Northland,* its passengers and crew, and the places it visited during the seasonal cruises. I make extensive use of these images to argue for the continuity of the ship, keeping in mind Rose and Tolia-Kelly's cautionary 'beware the agency of the image' (Rose, G. & Tolia-Kelly, 2009, p. 25).

- https://vilda.alaska.edu/.

Decommission, Byrd, and Re-commission

I find little archival evidence for the brief interlude between the ship's final detachment from the Bering Sea Patrol and decommissioning from the U.S. Coast Guard at the close of the 1938 season and its re-commission for the 'Neutrality Patrol' (also known as the 'South Greenland Patrol') in the North Atlantic in 1941. A number of articles and websites refer to a refit in 1939 to prepare for Admiral Byrd's second Antarctic expedition, but that venture was cancelled in 1940 when Byrd was

recalled to active duty in the U.S. Navy. I am not able to identify what refitting projects were completed, nor where the work was done. Evidence from the official records resurfaced beginning in 1941. The Ship's logbooks for the years 1942 - 1944 are in the [US] National Archives US Coast Guard Log Books 1942-47.

- [U.S.] National Archives Record Group 26, Records of the US Coast Guard; Entries (NC-31) 159 D-I, Identifier 587169.

WWII and the North Atlantic

U.S. Coast Guard Historian's Office. This one-man historian office in Virginia is located in an upstairs cavernous office in a civil-war era brick building on the campus of Homeland Security. The Director, while lamenting his lack of resources, handed over two boxes labeled '*Northland*.' Some documents were in folders, others just mixed in a jumble. They contained news clips, photographs and ceremonial scripts which related both to this ship and to its' namesake, a cutter commissioned in the 1980s. Most of the relevant content relates to its service in the North Atlantic during WWII. Several articles claimed to trace the full history of the ship, and I have consulted them for continuity purposes, only to realize that some of the 'facts' they recount are incorrect (I consulted several of the documents from the Pacific Northwest Coast Guard Office for this period, with much the same result). The deal, said the beleaguered historian, is that I could freely copy or scan anything, in exchange for leaving a copy of everything in a folder on the computer. He also gave permission to take any duplicate material, including photographs. The 'State mediates researchers' access to archival records in at least three moments: when it produces material, creates the archive, grants or denies permission (Kozma, 2015, p. 135 cited in Carminati, 2018, p. 43). As a result of this experience, I would add the state mediates when it also organizes the material, or fails to do so.

- USCG Historian's Office: CD labled '*Northland* Scans'.
- USCG Historian's Office: Two *Northland* file boxes, no ID.

Decommission and Sale

Despite multiple visits and queries, I have not been able to locate either the original bid specification documents for *Northland* nor a bill of sale circa 1946 documenting

when it was sold to The Weston Trading Co. I have to rely on newspaper articles and testimonies to confirm that the USCG *Northland* was sold to the Weston Trading Company of New York, acting on behalf of Mossad le'Aliyah Bet and Haganah (*New York Times*, 4 June 1947, p. 55; 2 October 1947, p. 15).

Aliyah Bet

Tracing the ship's activities in this phase required work in British, Israeli and online archival sites. Researching the Haganah/Aliyah Bet phase of the ship's biography turned out to be the greatest adventure and most complex part of this project. I made two research trips to Israel, one in 2015 to the Palmach Archives, the Central Zionist Archives ('CZA', as it is customarily referred to), Yad Vashem and the Clandestine Immigration Museum at Atlit. The second in 2017 focused only on materials in the Hagana Archives. Israel is geographically a small country, but even more critically, the country has centralized collections related to the Jewish people. 'Since the emancipation period, especially in the twentieth century, Jewish organizations have created country-wide, or even worldwide, archives. The Central Zionist Archives and Yad Vashem are representative of these developments' (Schenkolewski-Kroll, 2016, p. 312). In a sense, this research subject turns on the effects of displacement and migration that are reflected in the construction of the archives themselves, particularly those sited in Israel. The same geography was understood to be a safe haven for documents about and of Jewish people, and for the people themselves. 'The transfer of the CZA archives from Berlin to Jerusalem was prompted by the rise of Nazi power which intensified the Zionist movement toward Palestine and the movement of the archives to Palestine 'fulfilled Zionist ideology' (Schenkolewski-Kroll, 2016, pp. 312- 17).

The **Central Zionist Archives**, Jerusalem. The CZA experience demonstrates some of the challenges I encountered due to access and language barriers. To access the archives, one must first schedule (and presumably pass) an interview first. Carminati, recalling her efforts to access the Egyptian National Archive in Cairo, comments on how not all are welcome In archives, which have never been neutral places. 'Once the researcher makes it past the archive's zealous gate-keepers, a few other hurdles await' (Carminati, 2018, p. 37). To the interviewer's question 'How is your Hebrew,' I

honestly answered 'I have none.' 'How do you expect to use the archives then, even the search window is in Hebrew!' At which point, I explained the project and she took pity on me, enough to turn her screen toward me, pull up the search form and show me the field to use to enter a keyword. And then she suggested a record locator 'L587.' It turned out that the search would accept English words and return results that were also in English.

My primary goal at CZA was to find a passenger list. There were at least 600 orphans on board some of whom might still be alive. It was impossible to figure out the first day at the archives, but I remembered having seen references to the CZA archives on an online site associated with the Atlit museum, and was able to cross reference those citations and return to CZA and put together the passenger list (see Appendix). I was ultimately not successful in finding any survivors to interview (not at the time of writing this chapter draft). But I did become familiar with one of the key challenges, as I tried searching for their names in various online sites. Not only is 'Transliteration the quintessence of arbitrariness' (Carminati, 2018, p. 43), but it creates false dead-ends and obstacles to pursuing promising leads. British personnel created the lists as passengers disembarked in Haifa. Their Czech, Hungarian and Romanian names were transliterated at that time. Many of them subsequently adopted Hebrew names. The ship also had a transliteration problem. Alternate names and spellings include *Medinat Hayehudim; Medinat Ha' Yehudim; Medina; M. Jehudit, Medinah.* In the [British] National Archives, most of the official documents refer to *Northlands,* the name of the British ship that some mistakenly believed was use rather than the *Northland*.

- Central Zionist Archives: Record Group J21/98.
- Central Zionist Archives J21\1483-39.

Yad Vashem, Jerusalem. 'With regard to the archives, this objective [to assure the unity of the Jewish people] was manifested in efforts to transfer all Jewish archives left in Europe after the war. This policy led to [the establishment of] Yad Vashem and its archives in Jerusalem in 1953' (Schenkolewski-Kroll, 2016, p. 312). This place is one of the two primary centers for Holocaust research; the other is in New York City. My first encounter there pulled past and present together in the bodies of new Israeli army inductees waiting their turn to enter the building. A part of their

standardized training requires a visit to Yad Vashem to attend lectures on the Holocaust and view some of the many poignant artifacts held in the center. So when I approached the front door, I had to step over piles of duffle bags and navigate through dozens of young soldiers, rifles slung across their back as they waited for their turn to go in. Much of the material held in Yad Vashem are in the form of copies of documentation found in Europe and elsewhere, having to do with the Holocaust. One of its original projects is the production of testimonies documenting the victims and survivors of the Holocaust. These archives are highly securitized, and although much of the content is digitized, the majority can only be accessed from within the reading room.

My purpose at this site was to locate any information about them available in the archives. I secured both video and audio evidence for ten passengers, and identified several more which have filmed testimony that is unfortunately not yet digitized. The archives do not provide access to any original content that has been digitized, so it was not possible to examine any content directly. I transferred those files to a translator who was not able to identify any content specific to the passage on *Northland*, as the testimonies are primarily about the experience of the Holocaust. This was, and remains, my principle disappointment in the project, that is that I was unable to acquiring any first person accounts about the experience of being on the ship from the passenger point of view.

- Yad Vashem Archives: P.37 Item 4068379: *Protest broadsheets against British terror in Eretz Israel*. Jerusalem.
- Yad Vashem Archives: P.37 Item 5084539: *Six memoir booklets regarding the experiences of the Jews of Bulgaria during World War II.* Jerusalem.
- Yad Vashem Archives: O.37 Item: 9555397, File #700: *Displaced Persons Collection* (Sheerit Hapletah (Hebrew & German), Jerusalem.
- Yad Vashem: 1458/80 *Photographs of Northland under surveillance in Mediterranean*: Item 41123; Item 26897; Item 4065151; Item 4065155; Item 42461. Jerusalem.
- Yad Vashem: P.37 Item: 4060399, File #149. *Documentation on illegal immigrant ships from Bulgaria via Bulgaria and on aliya from Bulgaria,* 1939-1965 (ארכיון אישי של בנימין ארדיטי). Jerusalem.

The **Palmach Archives and Museum** in Tel Aviv. This institution was founded to document and preserve the stories of Jewish ground forces and naval organization in

during the British-Mandate period. The Palyam fought British forces during the mandate period and Arab forces during what is referred to as 'The War of Independence' of 1948. The archivist, Dr. Harouvi, provided videos of both Palmach/Palyam participants and Machal (foreign volunteers) as well as historical footage from the time, references to several books that I was not familiar with and some documents from the archive in Hebrew which required translation. A volunteer curator at the Palmach, Dr. Avashai, later sent me a copy of a letter he'd found while organizing a donation to the museum, which pointed me to a British sailor named Bernard Wallis, a retired Royal Navy sailor who'd been on the HMS *Cheviot* when it intercepted *Northland/Medinat* and was still living in Bristol. Bernard Wallis now has dementia, but his wife forwarded his journal from those days and through her, I contacted The HMS *Cheviot* Association in Devon, and visited to look through their albums. Dr. Harouvi also put me in touch with a former commander of the Palyam, Yahuda Ben-Tzur, still living in Cesearea and whom I was fortunate enough to interview on that same visit.

- Palmach Archives: Videos *Own the Waves* & *Toast to the Ships.*
- Palmach Archives: Bernard Wallis Letters, 1954.
- Palmach Archives: Aliyah Bet Photos, 1944 - 1948.

Museums

The **Israeli Naval Museum** was closed for renovations. Apparently, the Hebrew website announced the closure, but the English version did not. After a long walk along the Haifa coast to reach the museum, it was clearly shuttered but there were workmen on site. I managed to reach a museum official who allowed us (my cousin accompanied me) on the grounds, but the museum itself was off limits. I wished to see (and perhaps surreptitiously touch) *Northland's* ship's wheel that was (and I believe is once again) on display in the museum. The archival records they held were apparently mostly duplicated in the Atlit Clandestine Immigration Museum's online database (referred to in the CZA discussion).

Online Sources

The **Atlit Detention Camp Museum**. The Atlit camp was the first purpose-built detention camp used by the British Colonial Office to intern 'illegal immigrants' as well as Jews arrested for sabotage and violent activities. It soon proved too small a scale as the Aliyah Bet effort translated into tens of thousands of immigrants. The Camp has been turned into an experiential museum which is designed to communicate a certain narrative to visitors, one of questionable authenticity but one of great interest given the focus of this research. The Atlit organization has helpfully begun to amass a database of refugees who came by ship, air and land, which made it possible to identify critical records in another archive for which the interface to the records is entirely in Hebrew (even for English language documents). Despite several requests, I was unable to make contact with the museum's archivist, but did visit the site during that first visit to Israel. However, the online database the museum has compiled was the one I used to cross-reference with the Hebrew-only search interface at CZA.

- http://en.maapilim.org.il/Category/51164.

The Machal Challenge. The official records in the institutions discussed above held little information regarding the ship's non-Hagana officers and crew, and in fact, are not even mentioned in the accounts of most Israeli (English language) accounts of Aliyah Bet. Most of the available information about these persons is available online from the websites listed below and amassed by the volunteers themselves, their voices and contribution otherwise not expressed in the historical record. I relied heavily on these accounts, which I approach as a mode of oral history, to piece together the initial voyage from Baltimore to Bayonne. I failed to find any useful account of 'Captain Morgan', the merchant captain of *Northland* (in contrast with the Hagana leaders on board), and relied on a memoir written by Rudy Patzert, captain of the *Northland's* sister ship in Aliyah Bet as a substitute for his perspective.

- Palyam website: http://www.palyam.org/English/Volunteers/13570519.
- Machal website: http://www.machal.org.il.
- Palmach Center website: http://info.palmach.org.il/show_item.asp?levelId=42865&close=1.
- Wertheimer Family Foundation website: http://www.wertheimer.info/family/GRAMPS/Haapalah/.

- Israeli Vets website: http://www.israelvets.com/roster_aliyahbet_crews_ship.html#northland.

Despite gathering a large mass of material in that first Israeli visit, once I began the process of compiling and analyzing it all, I felt I'd come up short. I was not yet able to develop a deep understanding of the dynamic on the ship from the perspective of the Jewish crew and passengers. 'Serendipity and Obstinacy are key to knowing what is available in the archive' (Carminati, 2018, p. 42). Within the material I had, I did find one passing reference to a logbook for a different Aliyah Bet ship. It cited the **Hagana Archives** in Tel Aviv as its source. I had understood that there were no logbooks kept (this was a clandestine operations, after all), but wrote to the archivist to find they did have a file on the *Northland/Medinat*, it did hold a 'log book' and the contents were in Hebrew. After arranging for a translator, I flew back to Israel and found the file to be critical in reconstructing the ships actual sea tracks from the Turkish Straits to Palestine and for understanding how decisions were being made on the vessel and land. We spent two days in the reading room where I recorded the translator reading from the Hebrew documents and later transcribed them into OneNote. While I was never able to find passengers to interview, I did at least come to know something about the experience of being on that ship at that time in this way.

- Hagana Archives, Tel Aviv: Document Collection Folder 14-248. File 80/6230/5; Mossad Log; News Articles; Broadcast from Medinat; Memo on Crew; Black Sea; Deportation Count; Details about the fallen; Forged ID Cards; Intelligence Letter; Acre Police Readiness; Letter from Polish Immigrant; Northern Crew; PSS Report #1; Report on the Arrival of Northern; Memorial Page; Request for Details on the Fallen; Request for details; What is exact number of immigrants?
- Hagana Archives, Tel Aviv: Document Collection. Testimony Folder 14-1034: 4.51 Yosef Almog; 134.7 Ephraim Shiloh; 171.21: Ahron Michaeli; 171.39: Ptahia Feig.

British Sites and Sources

Archives

The British National Archives, like the United States National Archives, is a formal repository of official documents and the experience of working in one is much lie the

other. Formal request processes and timing, security precautions and similar rules. ‘For if the official archive is a work- place, it is also a panopticon whose claim to total knowledge is matched by its capacity for total surveillance. This makes archive users into stealth strategists and even, if only figuratively, into thieves as well' (Burton, 2006, p. 9).

At times, I began to view the ship as the protagonist, and thus in this Aliyah Bet story the antagonist the British Government, and more specifically the Cabinet, Foreign Office, Colonial Office and Royal Navy. I found that even in the research process, my focus on the ship tended to pull me in that direction and I made a conscious effort to balance my point of view, especially when reviewing this material. 'Though it sounds trite to say it yet again, we are reminded that in a situation of inadequate and conflicting evidence, our moral sympathies, political understanding, and cultural assumptions will all affect what is seen as likely to be true. This debate reminds us to recognize our own arguments and narratives for what they are, present attempts to understand what may have happened in the past, rather than a representation of the past itself' (Curthoys in Burton, 2006, p. 368).

The available official documentation from these departments are centralized in the [British] National Archives at Kew in London. I spent several weeks altogether in those archives. As I did in other archives, I used a camera extensively to record relevant documents in these archives. Many of these were yellowed or on fine, thinned to paper and it took extra time to handle them and capture their image with causing damage. The documents in the collections I list below provide evidence for not only the seriousness with which the government took the clandestine or ‘illegal’ immigration project, but also the internal conflicts among the parties as post-war alliances and priorities were addressed. Some of these documents are specific to *Northland*, but most provide background on the internal debates within the government and between departments. Admiralty correspondence, for example, pushes back on the Royal Navy's role in intercepting ships and insists on moderating the tactics proposed by the colonial office. In particular, the documents relating the *President Warfield/Exodus 1947* incident were crucial to understanding the change of tactics executed with respect to *Northland* (and *Paducah*) on the part of both the Haganah and the British government. Unfortunately although it was listed as

available, the record for ADM 53/124590- *Cheviot* Ships Logs 1948 was missing logs only for 1947, and the archive was unable to solve that mystery.

- CAB 195/2/19: Notebook. Air Raids; Reform of Foreign Service; Colonial Service; Jewish Refugees - Admission to Palestine; Prisoners of War: Shackling; Indian Commissioned Officers: Powers of Punishment; Red Army Day; Shipping.
- CAB 79/38/5: #11 Illegal Jewish immigration into Palestine. #17 Provision of shipping to return refugees in the Mediterranean.
- ADM 1/19572: CAPTURES OF SHIPS (15): Arrest of illegal Palestine immigrant vessel 12 Aug: report from HMS VENUS.
- LCO 2/3218: Ships of unrecognized flag: proposal that officers commanding H.M. ships be authorized to arrest on the high seas certain specified categories of vessels suspected of carrying illegal Jewish immigrants to Palestine.
- FO 1071/39: Jewish immigration into Palestine was causing huge problems for the British authorities.
- TDEFE 4/8/138 Prep of illegal ships November 27.
- DEFE 5/6/214 Memo by the First Sea Lord.
- DEFE 4/7/127 minutes of meeting.
- DEFE 5/3/62 Sea Lord Memo 22 March '47.
- DEFE 4/3/57 Meeting with Intelligence Directors.
- DEFE 5/3/31 Naval Escorts.
- DEFE 5/3/25 Transport of Illegal Immigrants.
- DEFE 5/6/223 Implications of w/d - dated 27 October 1947.
- DEFE 4/2/30 - Military implications.
- ADM 1/20789 - policy on boarding illegal immigrant ships.
- ADM 1/20621 - Med station reports.
- ADM 1/20778 - warning about unseaworthiness.
- ADM 1/20779 - illegal traffic into Palestine.
- CAB 134/526 Official Cabinet Minutes on Palestine 1947-1948.

Association Collection

I reviewed the **H.M.S. *Cheviot* Association's** collection, housed in a member's home in Devon. I was welcomed (along with my dog) into the couple's home and reviewed the materials on their dining room table. Afterwards, we all had tea in the sunny, flower-filled garden. The collection contains several binders filled with photographs, articles and notes from men who served on the ship, some of which relate personal accounts of the interception of *Northland/Medinat* off the coast of Palestine. Bernard Wallis' handwritten journal with a day by day account of his service on the H.M.S. *Cheviot*, including the interception of *Northland/Medina*, provides a glimpse of a sailor's experience and perceptions which are and example of the kind of information that is never accessible via official ship's logbooks. Precisely because this

is not an official archive, the materials of the association were essential to gaining a rare British sailor's perspective on Aliyah Bet. 'Archives—that is, traces of the past collected either intentionally or haphazardly as ''evidence''—are by no means limited to official spaces or state repositories. They have been housed in a variety of unofficial sites since time immemorial' (Burton, 2006, p. 3).

- H.M.S. *Cheviot* Association, Devon. *Diary of Bernard Wallis*; HMS Cheviot Album.

Note: I am aware that I have not included any sources specific to a Palestine Arab perspective. I made a decision to use texts such as Israeli historian Matti Gollani's *Palestine Between Politics and Terror* (2013) and Ibrahaim Abu-Lagod's *Transformation of Palestine* (1971) to develop an understanding of the grounded conflict underway in Palestine at the time the ship was serving in Aliyah Bet. I understand, in a general sense, how pressures induced by Aliyah Bet immigration was one of the factors in Arab discontent in Palestine, but I did not find there was a direct connection to *Northland/Medinat*. Had I been approaching this subject not from the angle of the ship, but rather from a territory-centric approach, I would have certainly have sourced evidence from for an Arab perspective.

Israeli Naval Service

A number of secondary sources indicated that *Northland/Medinat* became Israel's first warship, about four months after failing to break the British naval blockade of Palestine. Indeed, the only English language book published on the Israeli Navy is titled *From Ice-Breaker to Missile Boat: The Evolution of Israel's Naval Strategy* ' (Tzalel, 2000). But the book has little to say about *Northland* and the author explains he had little to no access to official documents in the Israeli Defense Force archives. I sent several inquiries to the Ministry of Defense Archives, but received no reply. I understand that these archives are not easily accessed. Noam Hofstadter, a researcher with Akevot Institute for Israeli-Palestinian Conflict Research, quotes the former Israeli State Archivist Dr. Yaakov Lozowick reporting, 'Israel is not dealing with its archival material in a manner befitting a democracy. The vast majority of the material is sealed and will never be opened. The little of the material that will be made accessible will be accessible only with unreasonable

restrictions. The process of releasing of records lacks any public accountability or transparency'. Constant problems of under-funding de-classification, authority to limit public access to research material transferred from archivist to the creating authority. The military archives, for example, which for quite some time has expropriated the authority to decide the declassification of its own records, has so far made available to the public just 0.4 percent of the files currently in its possession' (Hofstadter, 2018, online). On my last trip to Tel Aviv, I met and interviewed the Israeli Historian (and retired IDF Officer) Mordecai Naor who provided me with several contacts at the IDF who I hope will be useful for writing a book on this subject, but came to late for this thesis. I hope that these connections will enable me to trace the 'death' of the ship. There are hints of a decommissioning service that resembled a state funeral, but I was unable to confirm those stories through official documentation or other convincing evidence. It would be satisfying to have as clear a picture of the destruction of the ship as I do of its construction.

Despite the inevitable gap between aspiration and achievement, my work in the archives has been extremely rewarding, surprisingly exciting and sometimes frustrating. The breadth of *Northland's* geographical and operational biography required an equally broad archival effort, crossing continents, language, repository forms and institutional norms. The mass of official and unofficial material I collected forms the basis of the biography of *Northland*, and the mixed methods I employ to address the research questions depend very much on the information that resulted from this archival work.

Creative Methods

> *'Vital materialists will thus try to linger in those moments during which they find themselves fascinated by objects, taking them as clues to the material vitality that they share with them'.*
> - Jane Bennett, 2010, p. 17.

Cartography of Pauses

Small stories are used as analytic pauses, each of which takes place 'somewhere.' And as I argued in Chapter 1, that they take place on a ship in water is not to say they are 'placeless.' And even though Laloë is correct to assert that we cannot take a ship's track to be an accurate location device (Laloë, 2014), those tracks maintain a logic in motion. When combined with observers, both on and off the ship, and in the maritime context of shipping routes and navigation practices, it is possible to locate an event with some confidence, even at sea. Using multiple sources, including logbooks (Alaska), surveillance records and other official records, personal accounts and photographs, I assemble several approximations of the *Northland's* ship tracks on several Alaskan seasonal cruises and as a Hagana ship from Baltimore to Haifa. I illustrate each analytical pause with a custom maritime-focused map and use that process to enhance my own understanding of ship movement as well as communicate the location of those events.

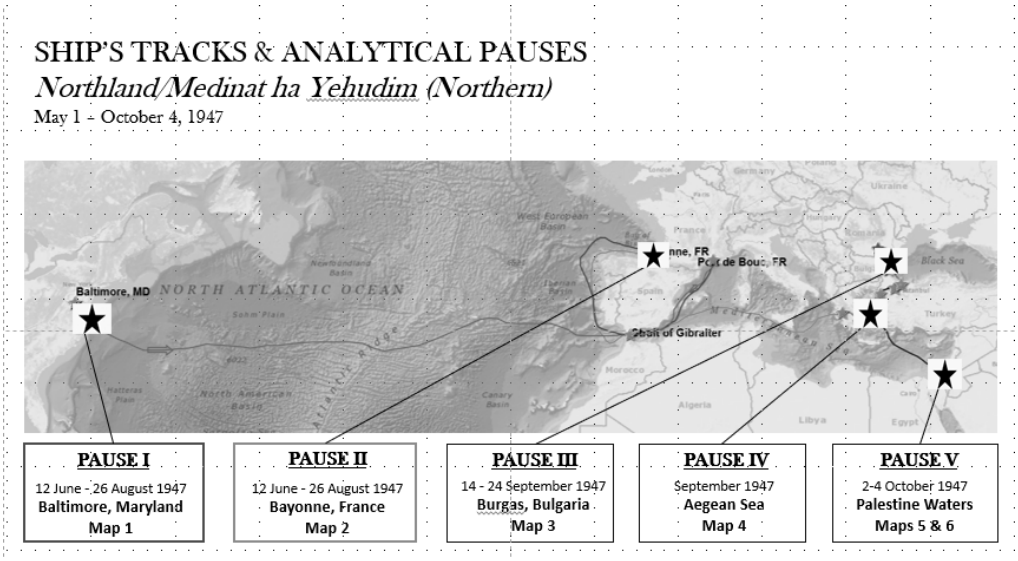


Figure 7. Example of a Pause Map Key.
Source: Author. Created 2017.

I engaged with copies of the original engineering drawings of the ship to become familiar with space, locations and materials (based on specification lists) from its original configuration. I enhanced darkened images to reveal its 'butock lines' and became familiar with the names of line drawing views.[14] I used a magnifying glass to

[14] Buttock lines are the cross-wise section lines, a bit like slices of bread, in ship drawings that show the contours of the ship from fore to aft.

figure out mottled labels and wrote them out on copies with call outs pointing to the element each referred to. As I read through the archival source material, I used the knowledge gained through encounters with the drawings to identify places referred to in disparate accounts of shipboard events. For example, I know where the 'Call to Mast' was held onboard *Northland*.[15] I can identify where Mossad personnel placed 'sliks' were installed to hide people and objects from British inspection. I can look at nearly any photo of the ship and identify where it was taken. These activities helped me take possession of the ship as a subject. The drawings also formed the basis for the next level of material, creative engagement with the ship; limited, experimental model making. As this practice is rare in political geography, I include a discussion of the practice, its affordances and drawbacks.

Figure 8. Working with the blueprints.
Source: Author photo. Created 2017.

Model Making

I chose to combine physical and digital technologies to build models of *Northland*. Because I am particularly interested in the physical adaptations of the ship, I built several partial models. These are not models that you might see in a maritime museum, but rather structural and spatial explorations. Had the ship still existed, I

[15] The commanding officer's deck court is held aft of the mast and is the place to which enlisted personnel were summoned and judged when they had transgressed Coast Guard rules and regulations.

might have been able to explore that version, in a similar way that Kimberley Peters' manual labor on the Caroline ship familiarized her with its materiality and structure (Peters, 2011). Manual methods enabled me to develop the desired familiarity with the structure, spaces and configurations of the ship and digital methods enable the production of multiple instances with which to build out each version. To begin, I used technical drawings to build a prototype cardstock model of *Northland's* hull including structural elements that were consistently present through the life of the ship.

'Architectural models exist somewhere between the realm of ideas and the physical materiality of buildings' (Starkey, 2006, p. 324). Model making, then, similarly exists in that same liminal space. This process of materializing drawings into reified structures enables the researcher to occupy literally creative space. For example, reading a blueprint as a step towards building a model is a very different experience from reading a blueprint as a text. In the first instance, it is a set of instructions and in the second it is a description. It may seem a minor distinction but knowing that a ship's deck has a camber is a quite different understanding than emerges from model-making which entails extracting that information from the plans, calculating the angle from the plans and translating that information into measurements which conform to the scale of the proposed model.

The planning and construction processes emplace new knowledge within my mind and body. For example, I developed a tactile comprehension of the geometries referenced in the ships' logs which recount such heavy sea motion that waves broke over the sides in volumes that exceeded the scuppers capacity, flooding the deck below. I can comprehend how the Alaska native couple wed on board by the captain in 1932 processed down the deck - an aisle that tilted seaward.

Figure 9. ‘Bread and Butter’ paper model work.
Source: Author photo. Created 2017.

The geometries of the thing come to 'life' in a way that writing cannot achieve. Working from historical photographs, a ship may appear in shades of grey, but the plans specify brass fittings and varnished oak tables in the captain's mess and plain pine throughout the general mess. Adding colour, texture and finish to the spaces and structural organization of the ship brings some imagined instance of the vessel that breathes some kind of life into the traces it left behind. As Rose argues visual images are not entirely reducible to their context. ‘Visual representations have their own effect' (Rose, 2012, p. 25), the same could be true for the produced models. The effect (and affect) agency of a model has much to do with the decisions of the researcher with respect to the objectives and tactics used to produce it. Consider the planning required to produce a scale model of a ship, and how the decisions made are fundamental to the experience of making and the composition of resulting product.

Model-making decisions, based on design objectives and practicalities, influence skill requirements, costs, practices and outcomes. What scale to use, which version of the object to model, what materials to use, how to record the processes, how to represent the outcome? Modeller and maker communities and resources provide extensive guidance on everything from determining optimal scale, CAD and 3D rendering software and print guidance, glues, paints, materials, etc. The complexity lies in matching research objectives with the affordances of a given model-making technology and matching or compensating for skill sets and resources required to

produce the model. The following discussion continues to focus on built environments as model subjects.

Model Design Considerations

Defining the *Version*: The language of vessel conservation can be leveraged to discuss some key points when planning the production of a scale model (National Historic Ships, 2010). In keeping with the researcher's objectives, he or she must determine which *version* or versions of the object to model. The *version* represents, at a particular point in time, the built environment's configuration, adaptations, condition, operational use, working location and associations. *Configuration* refers to the physical structure as well as substantial elements such as armament, life boats, aircraft, sails, for example when referencing a ship. *Condition* refers to the state of the physical structure with respect to the state of repair, paint scheme, maintenance and repair. Operational use, as opposed to purpose, is the use to which the structure was put - 'conserving operational use is rarely the same as conserving historic purpose' (National Historic Ships, 2010, p. 199). *Working location* means the area in which the building was placed, or a vessel or vehicle operated. Finally, *associations* refer to the special connections that exist between people, places and the object.

Determining *Scale*: Despite characterizations of the term 'scale' in Human Geography as 'stubbornly elusive' (Sayre & Vittorio, 2009, online) and lacking consensus on what is meant and how it should be operationalized (Marston *et al*., 2005), it intersects with the domain of model making in operationalization. Making models as a phenomenological method relies upon key decisions in which determinations about scale are central in a constructivist mode. Epistemologically, the determination of scale dictates much of the processes, materials and level of detail in the model and in turn, is interrelated with the ontological inquiry the model making serves. 'The researcher subject is regarded as structuring and being structured by the object' (Harvey, 1973 in Hoefle, 2006, p. 240).

From the nine types of scale (Sayre & Vittorio, 2009) two are most useful in this discussion; *Scale as Relation*: A relative framework for comparing attributes or processes through observance and relational category definition and *Scale as Size*: A quantitative measure of an attribute or process. The first is useful to the researcher in determining scale and the second relates to the size of a finished physical model. For scale modelers, the term scale is both determinant and explicit. ‘Scale is specific to each location: if [something] is bigger or smaller then it is because it can be made bigger or smaller at this site or that. Put briefly, size is a 'specific accomplishment' and not something that is 'given'’ (Law, in Dovey, 1999, p. 159).

The modeler selects a scale based on a number of criteria, the most important of which is the object and what he or she intends to represent about that object through model-making and nearly always understood as size calculated as a mathematical ratio of the original to the model, akin to a cartographic understanding of scale in which units on the model correspond to real-world dimensions. For example, 1:32 (1" = 2' or 41.7mm) is an 'immensely' popular scale both for individual figure modeling and incorporating figures with vehicles or on dioramas whereas 1:350 (1" = 16.8' or 5mm) is the most popular scale for marine modelers (finescale.com). Scale determines not only the finished size of the model, but the level of detail that is possible. Although the objectives of a scale modeler of ships, for example, differ from those of a human geographer who builds a model of a ship, they share a set of concerns about scale as relation but might well choose a different scale to meet their respective goals

Jane Jacobs argues that "that scale is produced relationally and in specific contexts (Jacobs, 2006, p. 70), the representation of weaponry on a model of a warship, for instance, would be critical to understanding the ways in which it operated as 'a weapons platform' (Morgan 2007). Warship models built by model shipwrights on display in museums or assembled from kits in homes most often represent the ship as commissioned and emphasize armament.

For my research project, the decision to produce a ship model is, *a priori*, the selection of a micro-geographical scale. Other types of subjects might operate at a 'higher' geographical level. Even so, the idea that 'a change in scale represents a shift from one set of relations to another holds true at a micro-level, as a scale of

1:32 vs. 1:200 afford different levels of fidelity and detail and may include or preclude certain processes and materials. It should be noted that digital models do not have the same constraints, as they are generally produced at full scale and re-computed at any or multiple scales as required. For my project, I decided upon a 1:200 scale that results in a model ship of just under 1' representing a ship that was 208' in length. This scale aligns with a common nautical model standard, thus various materials are readily available through model supply shops.

One drawback of this scale becomes evident when figures are included. Representing human and animal persons at a 1:200 scale renders them miniscule. A 6' tall man is scaled to 3/8" that is useful only at a very nominal level. It is not possible to distinguish individuals, positions, uniforms, or the like at this scale, although it is possible to show relative population density on board. Representing, for example, the spatial organization of a Native Alaskan wedding on board *Northland* at 1:200 is possible, but it would be impractical to attempt to distinguish the couple through clothing or accessories from the officers and crew. For this purpose and for similar reasons, modeling a corollary space of legality such as the Commanding-Officer's-Mess-as-Floating-Courtroom was better accomplished as a cut-away at a larger scale such as 1:32.

On paper, a certain scale may appear appropriate, but once I began working with three dimensions in a particular scale it become much more apparent whether it serves the research purpose or not. In some situations, a model-maker will deliberately decide not to adhere entirely to a scale. "The general rule is that as far as practical, modelers will try to keep to scale, but the prime aim is to make the model look realistic. Where scale and realism conflict, the latter will normally win" (scalemodelguide.com). Working through such challenges renders the absent object more concrete in the researcher's comprehension along with the specific contexts to be modeled. This is one of the significant advantages of the method. Among the challenges are skills acquisition and costs.

Skills acquisition: Whether the model making is physical, virtual or a combination of the two, the researcher will almost certainly need to develop new skills. Physical model-making technologies may be more familiar to most of us from snap-together model kits but constructing even a card-stock model from ship blueprint drawings is

quite another. I built several models using a 3-D pen[16], tracing the blueprints and then building up a skeleton frame to familiarize myself with the ship's architecture and spatial organization.

Through each step of the process, I have developed new spatial understandings of the angles and geometries of this ship. There is a sense of being made by making places. Specific to using model making as a researcher-focused practice, the reflective recording task is essential to understanding just how far to go to meet the objectives for including this method.

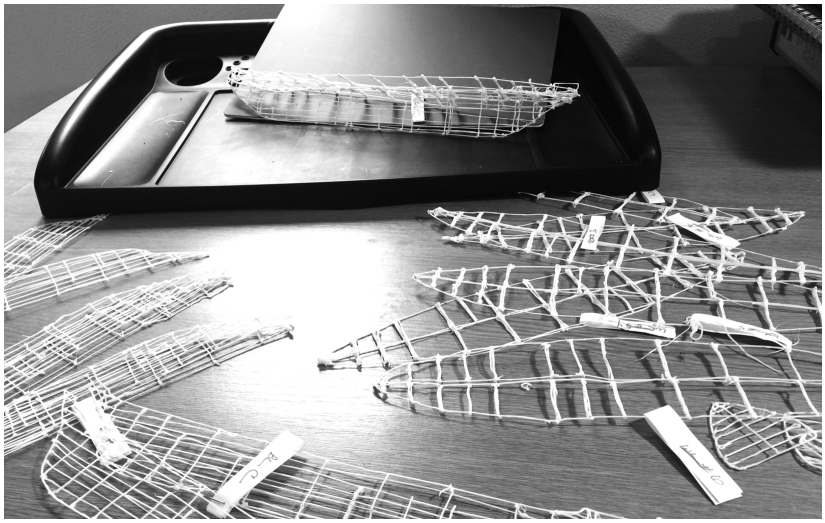


Figure 10. Ship frame coming together using 3-D Pen work.
Source: Author Photo. Created 2017.

Limitations and Constraints

While I argue for serious consideration of model making as a 'doing' method, there are limitations to what can be accomplished by creating models of objects. The produced objects can only be representations of the other. Ruins can be explored, cities can be hacked, buried ports can be measured, and soundscapes recorded. The *Northland* cannot be resurrected and any representation of it will inevitably be incomplete temporally, materially and socially. A researcher's model can only seek

[16] A 3-D print pen heats and then extrudes filament while the user sketches structures and shapes that solidify when the filament cools.

to explain a version of itself. The skills, tax, materials costs and time investment can be significant, depending on the use to which the model is put and the technologies utilized to create it.

One ship, Multiple Versions

This thesis is predicated on the assurance that the ship launched in 1926 at the Virginia News Shipyard is the same ship that was commissioned as the U.S.C.G. Cutter *Northland*, attached to the U.S. Navy in the lead up to and during WWII in the North Atlantic named U.S.C.G *Northland* - WPG-49, and purchased from the U.S. Government by the Weston Trading Company, converted to carry thousands of passengers and sailed into Palestinian Waters as the *Northland/Medinat ha'Yehudim* (The Jewish State) in 1947. This vessel, like many ships, embodied multiple versions of itself, specific to time, configuration and operational use. To paraphrase Massey, this is to characterize the ship versions as places that embody the 'integrations of space and time as spatio-temporal events' (Massey, 2012, p. 130). To confirm the identity of this ship across this continuum, I use archival materials and visual analysis supplemented with the 'doing' method of model-making to connect three versions of the ship using what the historical vessel conservation world terms 'off-ship' research. Multiple secondary sources provide supporting evidence that the versions discussed in this thesis are of the same ship.

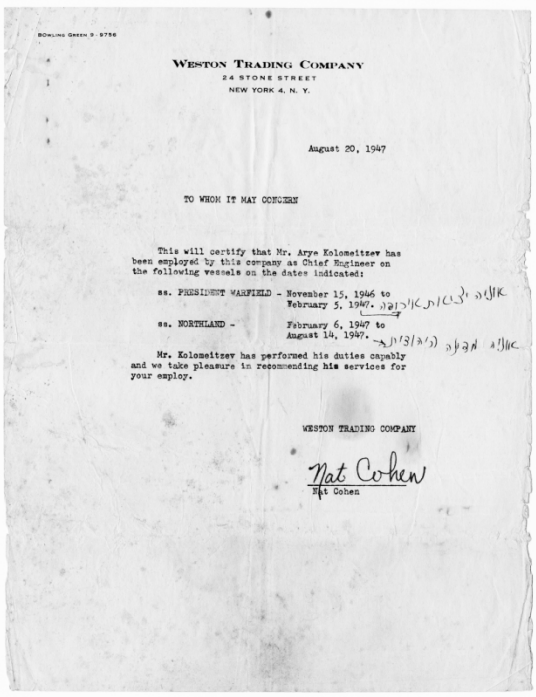
Version 1 refers to the 1926 original configuration of *Northland.* The Pacific Northwest Coast Guard Museum in Seattle holds a signed and dated set of the blueprints for the ship and provided me with digital scans. Although I was not able to source the original bid specifications, the *Journal of the American Society of Naval Engineers* reviewed the specifications for the 'New Vessel for Bering Sea Patrol to the Strongest, For Its Size, Ever' and provides various details including length, beam, displacementt, material and construction specifications which correspond to the details on the blueprints. 'An inspection of the plans reveals a ship of most unique design, quite different from any preceding Coast Guard vessels. Its keel was laid on 16 August 1926 at Newport News Shipyard in Newport News Virginia' (1926, pp. 343 - 6). The U.S.C.G. annual Report of 1926 states that the 'design for the cruising cutter

Northland, of special construction for Coast Guard duty in Alaskan waters and for cruises into the Arctic Ocean, to replace the Bear, was completed and the contract awarded. Appreciable progress on the vessel has been made by the contractor' (U.S. Coast Guard, 1936, p. 35). The (U.S.) National Archives' Record Group 26, Records of the US Coast Guard. Entry (NC-31/159A, 585454) holds the original ship's logbooks that document the ship's activities, officers and locations from 1927 to 1944. The Ships Log for 7 May 1927 Notes of the Day section records the commissioning of the ship into the U.S. Coast Guard fleet and the Commander J.F. Hotel taking command.

Version 2 refers to the ship as configured by the removal of the sailing rig and mast re-configuration, wartime paint scheme, additional armament, and equipment, including a Grumman float plan and hoist. Changes to the sailing rig were made in 1933, while the ship was still attached to the Bering Sea Patrol. Photographs in the collection of the Naval History and Heritage Archives show the ship undergoing these adaptations in the naval shipyard (Naval History and Heritage Command, NH 73843 and NH 73842). The blueprints provided by the Pacific Northwest Coast Guard Museum include a set that specify these adaptations. The museum also has copies of the annual Coast Guard publication 'Ship Movements' which summarizes each vessel's primary movements by year. Additional ship's logbooks in Record Group 26 (NC-31/159 D-I, 587169) cover the corresponding wartime years 1944 to 1946 and are identified as those of the U.S.C.G. Cutter *Northland*. Both Record Group 26 and the Alaska State Historical Archives hold copies of the annual reports submitted by the ship's commanding officer. These sources demonstrate the direct lineage of *Version 2* from *Version 1*. The *Northland* was decommissioned on 27 March 1946 and listed as one of 1,389 ships offered for sale in 1946 by the U.S. Maritime Commission in the post-war small ships sale authorized by Congress (United States Maritime Commission, 30 June 1947).

Version 3 refers to the ship version purchased and (re)configured by the Mossad/Hagana for the *Aliyah Bet* project. The National Archives Maritime Commission Records (RG-0178) do not contain a record of the *Northland's* sale to the Weston Trading Company. However, other archival sources connect the first two versions with the third. The United States Holocaust Museum's digital collection includes an image of a document dated 23 April 1947 that verifies merchant seaman Ayre Kolomeitzev's transfer from *President Warfield* to *Northland* and states the

latter will ‘sail very shortly.’ The Haganah archives in Tel Aviv hold a folder of communiques between the Palyam leadership on board and their onshore handlers that refer to the ship as ’the *Northerner.*’ Yoske Almog was the Palyam’s onboard leader of the ship’s mission. In his oral testimony, Almog recalled coping with an unexpected order to add an additional 1,000 places for refugees beyond what they had planned for. He said, ‘The solution was to load 1000 more people on the deck of the Northern due to its special arrangement, its features. This ship was 2000 ton and was built specially as a ship for weather observation in the American Sea in the North Sea. It was built as an icebreaker and was very stable’ (Haganah 4.51). The [British] National Archives holds an inspection report, conducted after the ship was towed to Haifa Port. Item number 20 states, ‘The ship was a 1275 ton vessel built in 1927 by NEWPORT NEWS SHIPBUILDING COMPANY for the purpose of icebreaking and had a normal career until 4 May 47 when her master Captain MITCHELL, was ordered to move to BAYONNE for refitting. There, a certain CAPTAIN MORGAN of Room 32, GRAND HOTEL, took over command. The ship then visited a succession of French Ports and was next traced on the 12 Sep in the DARDANELLES, on the following day in the BOSPOROS, and the day after that at BURGAS, under a pilot named HASSAN ALI. Nine days later she sailed for VARNA’ (FO 371/61957). In a plea to Panama from the British Foreign Office for it to withdraw Panamanian flag registration from *Northland* and *Paducah,* B.A.B. Burrows wrote on 17 September 1947,’The "Northlands" is also an ex-coastguard cutter, but of 1,273 gross registered tons and owned by the Weston Trading Company of New York. The same firm owned the "President Warfield" and the "Trade Winds" both of which reached Palestine waters with Jewish illegal immigrants on board' (FO E8540).



BOWLING GREEN 9 9756

WESTON TRADING COMPANY
24 STONE STREET
NEW YORK 4, N. Y.

August 20, 1947

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This will certify that Mr. Arye Kolomeitzev has been employed by this company as Chief Engineer on the following vessels on the dates indicated:

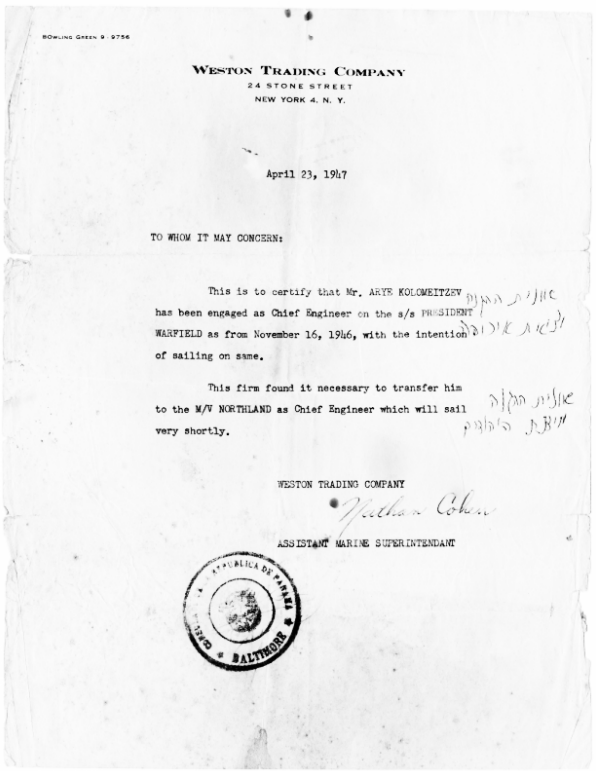
ss. PRESIDENT WARFIELD - November 15, 1946 to February 5, 1947.

ss. NORTHLAND - February 6, 1947 to August 14, 1947.

Mr. Kolomeitzev has performed his duties capably and we take pleasure in recommending his services for your employ.

WESTON TRADING COMPANY

Nat Cohen
Nat Cohen



BOWLING GREEN 9 9756

WESTON TRADING COMPANY
24 STONE STREET
NEW YORK 4, N. Y.

April 23, 1947

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

This is to certify that Mr. ARYE KOLOMEITZEV has been engaged as Chief Engineer on the s/s PRESIDENT WARFIELD as from November 16, 1946, with the intention of sailing on same.

This firm found it necessary to transfer him to the M/V NORTHLAND as Chief Engineer which will sail very shortly.

WESTON TRADING COMPANY

Nathan Cohen

ASSISTANT MARINE SUPERINTENDANT

REPUBLICA DE PANAMA
CONSUL
BALTIMORE

Figure 11. Transfer Papers 23 April 1947.
Source: Palmach Museum and Archive, Tel Aviv.

Additional texts, photographs, newspaper and magazine articles, letters, testimonies and personal journals found in multiple archival sources, as discussed in the archival research section, further establish the lineage between these three versions of *Northland*. A *New York Times* article dated June 4, 1946 titled 'Northland is sold to Mystery Buyer' reported that the sales application was signed by William Ash as an agent of the Weston Trading Company for $50,000 (*New York Times*, p. 55). Rudy Patzert, Captain of *Northland's* sister ship *Paducah* refers to a larger and better looking ship - *Northland* - arriving at the port of Burgas as they waited for the passengers to reach the port (Patzert, 1994, p. 114). Aliyah Bet volunteer Murray Greenfield's text 'The Jews' Secret Fleet' refers to the ship Jewish State as the former 'Coast Guard icebreaker *Northland*' (Greenfield, 1987, p. 173). Franz Liebreich's study of the British Navy's Role in thwarting Aliyah Bet includes a photograph with the caption 'Former US Coastguard icebreaker Northland (Medinat Hajehudim/Jewish State) intercepted by HMS Charity on 2 October 1947' (Liebreich, 2004, p. 178). Volunteer crew member Eddie Abadi's daughter recorded that her father described 'boarding the Northland in Baltimore,' and being at the wheel off the coast of Palestine as 'four large warships surrounded the little icebreaker until he managed to collide into one of the ships, which crinkled like tin before the heavily plated former icebreaker' (Abadi-Erez, undated, p. 2).

Visual Analysis

In addition to the evidence above, I used two official drawing from the US Coast Guard Historian's Office and photographs from multiple sources to perform a comparative visual analysis of the broadside, bow and stern aspects of the three versions. I created the third drawing (image 9) by first tracing the core structure of the ship from the version 2 drawing and adding the adaptations made to the ship by the Mossad.

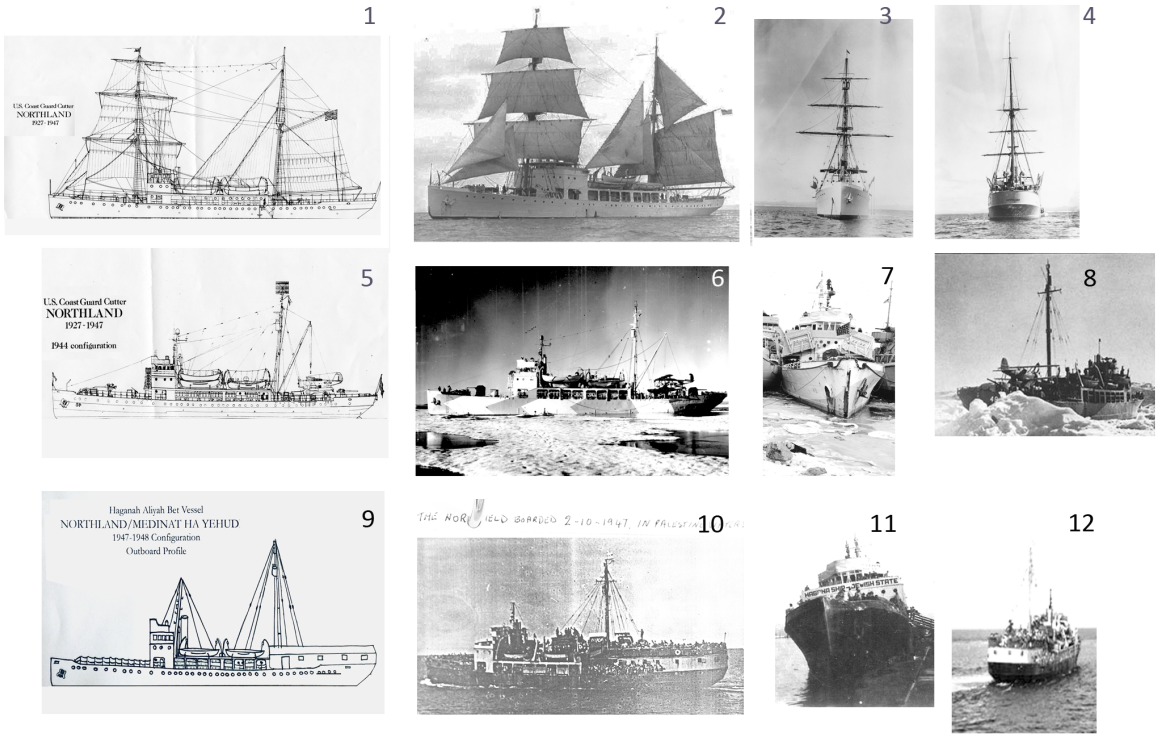


Figure 12. Same Ship: Three Versions Visual Comparison.
Source: Author Composite (see explanation below for individual image attribution). Created 2019.

VERSION 1: Images 1 – 4. ORIGINAL CONFIGURATION. 1927 – 1936. OWNER: UNITED STATES COAST GUARD. OPERATIONAL MISSION: BERING SEA PATROL. OPERATIONAL GEOGRAPHY: TERRITORIAL ALASKA. DESIGNATION: US COAST GUARD CUTTER *NORTHLAND*. FLAG UNITED STATES.

Image 1. Drawing of *Northland's* original configuration outboard profile. Source: Tilley, United States Coast Guard Historian's Office, Washington, D.C. Folder: USCG Cutter Northland. This drawing shows the ship with its original hermaphrodite brigantine sail rig. Note the bow shape, designed for ice operations.

Image 2. Broadside view of *Northland* circa 1928 under sail in Territorial Alaska. Source: United States Coast Guard Historian's Office, Washington, D.C. Folder: USCG Cutter Northland. Note white paint scheme and extensive rigging.

Image 3. Bow view of *Northland* at anchor circa 193, sails furled. Source: Naval History and Heritage Command NH 73839. Note bridge design extends across the breadth of the ship.

Image 4. Stern view of *Northland* at anchor circa 19342. Source: Naval History and Heritage Command NH 73838. Note stern design in which there is a visible divide between upper and lower freeboard paint scheme.

The hull shape, boat deck, covered walkway and bridge deck are visibly identifiable and persist through future adaptations and configurations.

VERSION 2: Images 5 – 8. WWII CONFIGURATION. 1936 to 1946. OWNER: UNITED STATES COAST GUARD AND ASSIGNED TO US NAVY. OPERATIONAL GEOGRAPHY: WWII NORTH ATLANTIC NAVAL

THEATRE. OPERATIONAL MISSION: NEUTRALITY PATROL, GREENLAND SURVEY, GERMAN RADIO STATION DISMANTALING, ANTI-SUBMARINE, SEARCH AND RESCUE. DESIGNATION: US COAST GUARD CUTTER *NORTHLAND* – naval Vessel WPG-49. FLAG: UNITED STATES.

Image 5. Drawing of *Northland's* 1944 configuration outboard profile. Source: Tilley, United States Coast Guard Historian's Office, Washington, D.C. Folder: USCG Cutter Northland. This drawing shows extensive modifications made to the ship. The sailing rig was removed, and the ship's mast configuration modified. The forward mast was removed entirely, and a shortened mast installed just aft of the bridge for radar and transmitter equipment. The aft mast was left in place and navigational equipment was affixed to a shorted height. The drawing does not show the camouflage paint scheme. Rafts were added and mounted to the bridge deck. On the aft deck, a float plane and hoist are visible, along with an anti-aircraft gun. A structure has been added to the roof of the bridge deck.

Image 6. Broadside view of *Northland* WPG-49 circa 1944 in Greenland ice floes. Source: United States Coast Guard Historian's Office, Washington, D.C. Folder: USCG Cutter Northland. The adaptations represented in the drawing are reified in this photograph. An additional anti-aircraft gun is mounted to the foredeck, the structure was covered with a camouflage paint scheme in 1943, and a Grumman float plane is visible on the aft deck. The structure on the bridge deck is populated in this photo, showing it to be an open observational deck.

Image 7. Bow view of *Northland* WPG-49 circa 1944 on the coast of Greenland rafted up to naval vessels on either side. Source: U.S.C.G Historian's Office, Washington, D.C. Folder: USCG Cutter Northland. The camouflage paint scheme is visible on the bow, as are the rafts mounted to the bridge. Note the canvas on the observation deck on top of the bridge, and the structural supports visible in this view. The ship's condition is degrading, most obviously seen in the bow rust and anchor chain hawsepipe stains.

Image 8. Stern view of *Northland* WPG-49 circa 1944 in ice in the North Atlantic. Source: The National WWII Museum, New Orleans. Don Leach photograph (I was not able to locate an aft view that precisely correlates to images 4 & 12). In this photo, the plane on the aft deck, the boat deck, and the camouflage paint scheme are visible.

The removal of the sailing rig is the most dramatic visual adaptation, but the addition of the technologies, armament, plane and hoist signify the ship's conversion from a civilian government vessel to a warship.

VERSION 3: Images 9 - 12. HAGANAH CONFIGURATION. 1946 to 1947. OWNER: WESTON TRADING COMPANY/HAGANAH. OPERATIONAL GEOGRAPHY: MEDITTERANEAN AND BLACK SEAS. OPERATIONAL MISSION: ALIYAH BET, CLANDESTINE JEWISH IMMIGRATION TO PALESTINE. DESIGNATION: civilian ship *NORTHLAND*/*MEDINAT HA'YEHUDIM.* FLAG: PANAMA.

Image 9. Author's drawing of *Northland's* 1947 configuration outboard profile. The drawing was constructed using the 1944 configuration drawing as a base, erasing elements that were removed in the sales preparation process and including adaptations that are visible in various photographs taken in the years 1946 and 1947. The armament, plane, hoist and navigational equipment were removed. A covered structure with door and windows has been built up on the aft deck. Screens have been added to the covered walkway.

Image 10. Broadside view of *Northland/Medinat ha'Yehudim* in the Mediterranean on 2 October 1947, approaching Palestine waters. Source: Palestine Patrol Album, *Cheviot* Association, Devon. H.M.S. Cheviot Album. The H.M.S. *Cheviot* was one of the ships whose crew surveyed and then boarded the ship. Although the image is of poor quality (it was captured from a photocopy on plain paper in a scrapbook-type album), the ship's hull is painted dark grey and the superstructure is white. The added extensive rear structure is evident, as is the bridge, covered walkway and boat deck. Note that the angle of the photo foreshortens the aspect of the bow. The caption states 'THE NORTHLAND BOARDED 2-10-1947 IN PALESTINE.'

Image 11. Bow view of *Northland/Medinat ha'Yehudim* at Haifa's 'Pier of Tears' dock, 4 October 1947. Source: Palmach Archives, Tel Aviv. Northern Collection. The ship's condition is further degraded; it appears to be listing to starboard, and a dent in the port railing is identifiable. This damage was reported in several accounts of the British naval interception and boarding 'action.' The banner 'HAGANAH SHIP – JEWISH STATE' is mounted across the bridge deck. The canvas cover and support structure of the observation deck is also visible in this view.

Image 12. Stern view of *Northland/Medinat ha'Yehudim* in the Mediterranean approaching Palestine waters, surveillance photo circa 28 September – 2 October 1947. Source: Yad Vashem, Jerusalem. In this view the raised structure on the aft deck is clear showing windows on the aft wall. The division between upper and lower freeboard identified in Image 4 is also identifiable, although the hull paint does not signify that divide. The white superstructure adaptation may cause visual confusion, but on close observation there are three distinct 'layers' in Image 12 but only two in Image 4.

Visual Comparison

In all three versions, core structural elements are consistently visible throughout the drawings and three complementary views of each version of the ship. The bow shape, hull, bridge and boat decks and covered walkway are consistently present in each version. This visual analysis provides a strong foundation for the argument that USCG Cutter *Northland* and *Northland/Medinat h'Yehudim* are the same ship. There is also documentary evidence, both from primary and secondary sources, that back up this claim. In particular, the advent of each set of major adaptations provides a genealogy for these three sequential versions of the ship.

Model-building familiarity

Finally, through the 'doing method' of model-building as discussed in the methods discussion, I became deeply familiar with the contours and core structure of the ship. The arguments in this thesis are predicated on the fact that these are three versions of the same ship. I am confident that the archival evidence, supporting secondary sources, visual analysis and model-building experience confirm that all three versions are of a single ship.

METHODOLOGY AND METHODS SUMMARY

The two key episodes from the biography of *Northland* are reconstructed using multiple archival and non-archival sources. The resulting biographical narrative is supported by creative processes of map-making, blueprint interrogation and model building. Using these methods, I reconstructed the angles of and on the ship at particular pauses (moments or events) in its history. Throughout this project, the material and perceptual angles of and on the ship are held as a constant. Much in the same way that the hull, boat deck and pilot house of the ship persisted structurally until its demise, even as operational changes required subtractions, additions and adaptations were made to sail, mast, armament and aft spaces. In the next two chapters, empirical evidence from the Territorial Alaska phase (Chapter 3) and Palestine phase (Chapter 4) is used to address the research questions. These chapters are structured with an introductory section that describes the ship's mission, configuration and condition, personnel and the maritime and political context (including geography) in which it operated during the phase. Each of the subsequent sections is dedicated to a single pause. Each pause is captured in a small story and illustrated by a pause map, based on the evidence extracted from the biography, and the outcomes of the creative practices. The research questions are then posed to the pause, and outcomes assessed. The chapter is closed with a summary of findings.

CHAPTER 4: TERRITORIAL ALASKA

> *'The name 'Alaska' is probably derived from Unalaska from the Aleut word agunalaksh, which means the 'shores where the sea breaks its back'.*
>
> - Corey Ford, p. 10.

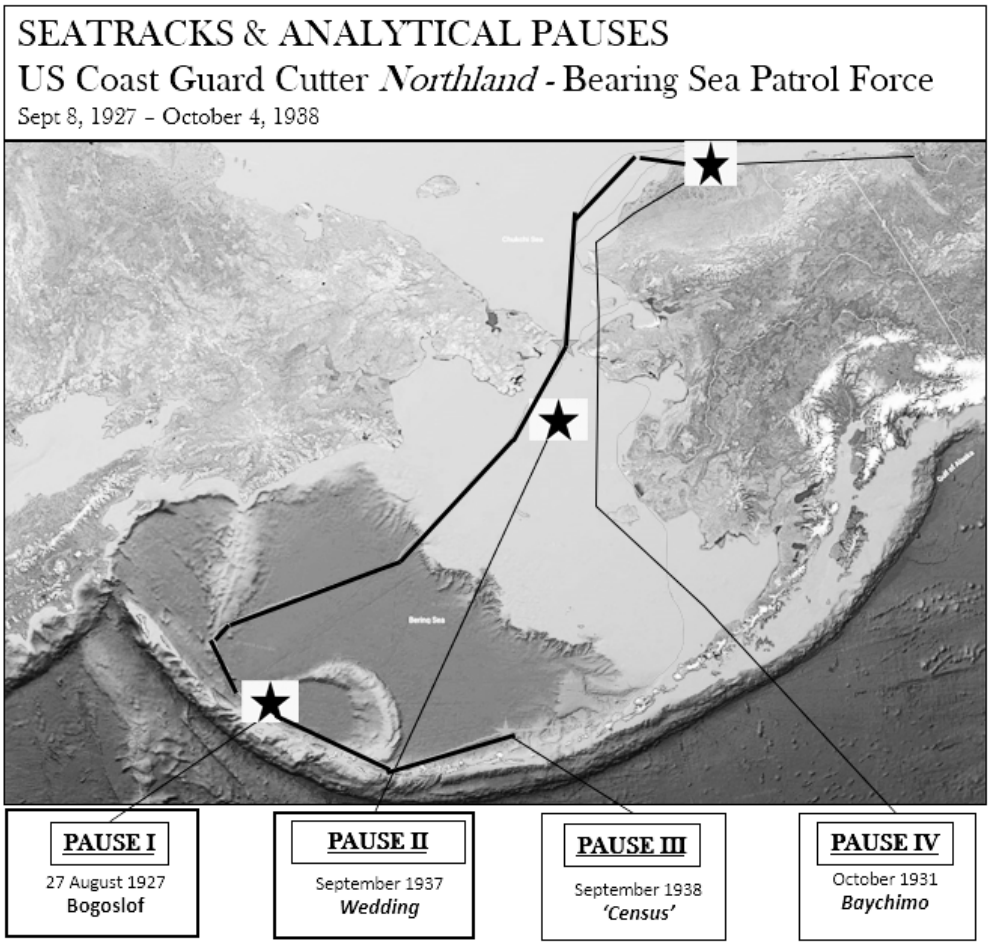


Figure 13. Territorial Alaska Pause Map Key.
Source: Author. Created 2018.

The US Coast Guard *Northland* steamed into Aleutian Island Unalaska's Dutch Harbor on September 8, 1927 to replace the retired cutter *Bear*, and 'so to begin' its first, albeit truncated, Bering Sea Patrol cruise in Territorial Alaska. The political status of the region, its denizens (human, fauna and flora) dwelling within its vast territory, the extreme operational environment and the history of the U.S. Coast Guard's service in Alaska together provide necessary context for interrogating the ship's participation in the distributed assemblage of extended state power in 1920s

and 1930s Alaska. The character of the ship itself is also discussed in this section before proceeding to the analytical pauses, each of which exposes multiple aspects of this ship's affordances in the assemblage.

Alaska at that time was a region belonging to the United States elevated from the status of military district to territory only fifteen years prior and still thirty-two years away from becoming a fully-fledged state. Federal governance of Alaska's coastal region in the 1920s and 1930s was tentative and perfunctory, focused primarily on resource management. The unique features of the region produced a unique version of the U.S. Treasury's obligations encompassing three of its four principal duties to 'First, save life and property at sea; Second, operate as part of the Navy in times of war, or such time as the President may direct; third, to maintain the International Ice Patrol of the transatlantic steamship lines (also a separate patrol) and fourth, to protect customs revenue' (Ridgley, 1967, p. 216). The government appended further duties specific to the Alaskan context. Some of these expanded duties were formal assignments; other activities emerged from the demands of the moment or the initiative of relatively autonomous commanding officers. While on patrol in the Bering Sea and Arctic Ocean,[17] the ship's ordinary preparedness routines, drills, supply activities, inspections, mail delivery, medical and dental service, and passenger transportation produced a maritime habitus alongside more extraordinary events including volcano surveying, ghost ship tracking, elaborate Alaska Native marriage ceremonies, and maritime border crossing diplomatic initiatives.

All of these activities occurred in the invariably challenging environment of ice, fog, gale, rough seas and great distances of the Bering Sea. Commander Robley Evans, the first naval officer to oversee a fleet of ships sent in 1892 to enforce the ban on pelagic seal hunting, recounted in his memoir, 'I am willing to admit that the Bering Sea is the worst patch of water it has ever been my lot to tackle, and I sincerely hope I may never have to do it again' (Evans, 1901, p. 58). The Bering Sea was a

[17] The *Arctic Ocean* is sometimes referred to as the *Arctic Sea* or *Alaska Sea*, but more often the Arctic Ocean contains numerous seas, though some oceanographers call it the *Arctic Mediterranean Sea* placing it as an estuary of the *Atlantic Ocean.* This paper uses *Arctic Ocean* and the specific sea where appropriate.

notoriously difficult assignment for Coast Guard crews and vessels that followed the navy into Arctic Alaska, including the purpose-built cutter *Northland*.

The evidential wake left in the sea tracks of *Northland's* eleven seasonal Bering Sea Patrol cruises demonstrates the powers of ship affordances to extend the influence and legal regime within an assemblage of a remote federal/colonial power within the particular context of Territorial Alaska. The evidence further suggests that ship affordances mediate and embody limitations to that same power. This chapter introduction introduces the unique character of the ship and provides an overview of the context for *Northland's* contribution to the extension of federal authority, followed by five sections, each of which investigates a particular moment or event. These are referred to as per the methodology employed, a 'pause' in the ship's experience while on the Bering Sea Patrol. The final section of this expansive chapter evaluates the evidence from these pauses in view of the research questions and theoretical approach.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Purchase: Russian America to United States Possession

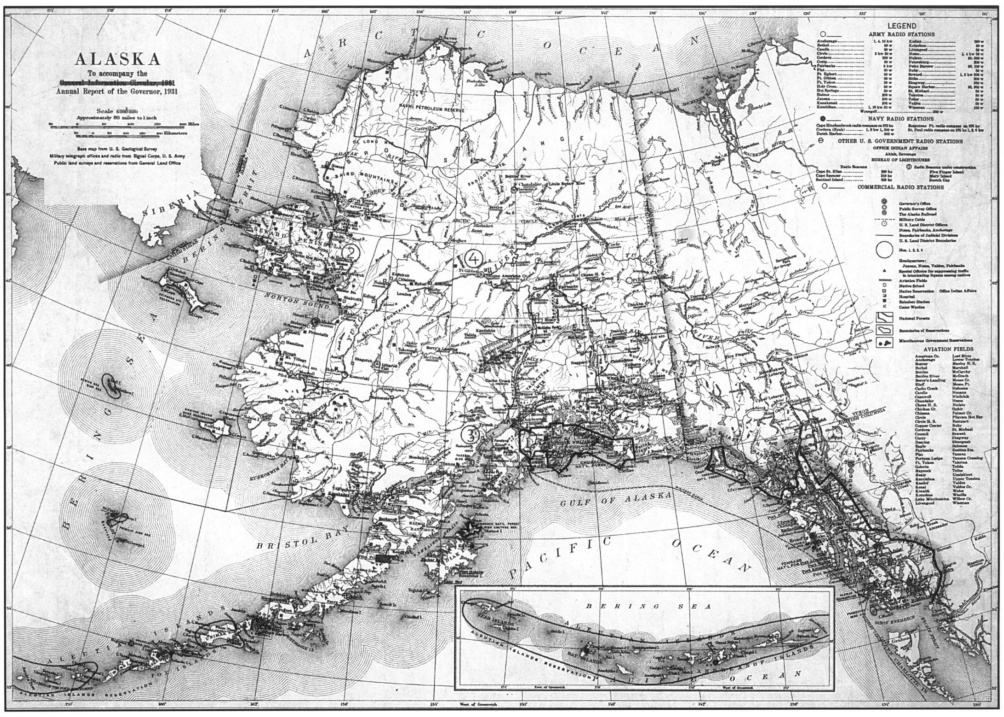


Figure 14. Map from 1931 [Alaska] Territorial Governor's Annual Report.
Source: Alaska and Polar Regions Collections, University of Alaska, Fairbanks.

In 1867, Senator Charles Sumner of Massachusetts followed the reading of the Russian America purchase treaty in the United States Senate with a rather florid floor speech. His lyrical description of the proposed purchase narrates the imagination which fueled the acquisition but also more pragmatically describes why the demands on the type and extent of Coast Guard service was to deviate and expand from its work elsewhere. Sumner described the territory as:

> *'Upwards of four thousand statute miles of coast, indented by capacious bays and commodious harbors without number, embracing the peninsula of Alaska, one of the most remarkable in the world, fifty miles in breadth and three hundred miles in length; piled with mountains, many volcanic and some still smoking; penetrated by navigable rivers, one of which is among the largest in the world; studded with islands which stand like sentinels on the coast, and flanked by that narrow Aleutian range which, starting from Alaska, stretches far away to Japan, as if American were extending a friendly hand to Asia'.*
>
> - Shiels, 1966, p. 23.

In the speech, Sumner also elaborated on the maritime context of Alaska.

> *'According to accurate estimates, the coastline, including bays and islands, is not less than eleven thousand two hundred and seventy miles, with Ounimak, which is the largest, exceeding seventy-three miles. In our part of the Behring Sea there are five considerable islands the largest of which is St. Lawrence, being more than ninety-six miles long. Add to all these, the group south of the peninsula of Alaska, including the Shumagins and the magnificent island of Kodiak, and then the Sitka group, being archipelago added to archipelago, and the whole together constituting the geographical complement to the West Indies, so that the northwest of the continent answers archipelago for archipelago to the southeast'.*
>
> - Shiels, 1966, p.24.

The Alaska purchase was often mocked in the press as 'Seward's Folly,' but supporters perceived the potential of natural resource extraction and also an opportunity to overturn British possession of what is today Canada's province of British Columbia. An article in the *New York World* declared,

> *'The purchase of the Russian territory renders it morally certain that we shall some day acquire [British Columbia]. In the first place, a gap in our possessions on the Pacific Coast will always be an eyesore to the nation, whose sense of symmetry will be offended by the ragged look of the maps. The national imagination shall always require that our coast line shall be continuous, and this aspiration will sooner or later be potential'.*
>
> - *New York World*, 1867 in Shiels, p. 87.

This invocation of a geographical imagination of contiguous possession never came to fruition. Alaska continues to be dis-contiguous from the rest of the United States (along with Hawaii). Alaskans refer to the rest of the United States as 'Outside' or the 'Lower 48.' This geographical imagination predicated partially on distance and disconnectedness is as salient to the forms of power exercised on the territory as

the distance from the rest of the United States as measured in miles, both terrestrial and nautical. This is particularly true of the Bering Sea Patrol operational environment; a barely surveyed, mostly uncharted maritime geography in which the Coast Guard service was charged with duties not performed anywhere else under conditions unlike those it encountered elsewhere.

From Military District to Alaska Territory: Governance

Immediately after the transfer, Alaska was not legally 'territory' but rather a military and customs district. President Andrew Johnson's single sentence proclamation that 'the acquisition of Alaska was made with the view of extending national jurisdiction and republican principles in the American hemisphere' was ambiguous with reference to governance. In the remaining years of the 19th century, the U.S. Army, Treasury Department and Navy managed the region in succession. The only laws extended by congress to Alaska concerned commerce, navigation and prohibitions on the import, manufacture and sale of liquor (Naske & Slotnick, 2014, p. 99).

Seventeen years of military governance were focused in the south mainland coast and in the Pribilof Islands, the location of regulated fur seal harvesting. There was no mail service, no lighthouse, no land surveys and no way to obtain title to land. This lack of civilian governance structure was an impediment to white settlement and development, though not a negative situation for Alaska Natives (estimated to have a combined population of about 25,000 at the time, in contrast with fewer than 2,000 white settlers). 'The army's task to govern Alaska was difficult because of the complete lack of laws, general orders or any guidelines to sanction and direct the military's actions' (Naske & Slotnick, 2014, p. 102). The only statutes in force at the time were aimed at foreign commerce, coastal trade and customs collections. All of these were primarily a function of the Treasury Department, which enforced these laws in maritime jurisdictions through the Revenue Cutter Service (the US Coast Guard's predecessor).

Military officers established a minimal formal civil governance system in situ using the instrument of military orders. 'Military guards also performed police functions, boards of officers acted as civil courts, and commanders and stay officers performed

duties normally allotted to governors and legislatures' (Naske & Slotnick, 2014, p. 103). But those powers were geographically limited. 'Law enforcement duty proved frustrating [for the military] because the garrisons exercised effective control only in the immediate environs of their posts' (Naske & Slotnick, 2014, p. 107). By 1870, only the land-tied 100-man Sitka garrison remained that asserted control over a few miles' radius around the camp. The Revenue Service and naval vessels provided intermittent transportation for a few scattered customs and federal officers, but otherwise exerted no influence over the district although the sea was the only route to Alaska at that time. A combination of funding and manpower cutbacks following the end of the civil war, the demands of multiple Indian wars in the West and frustrations regarding the mission itself led the army to withdraw from its Alaska District role and cede control to the Treasury Department in March of 1877.

The Sitka customs collector and his deputies at other ports thus inherited the role of exercising what federal authority existed. They were particularly challenged by tensions exacerbated by illegal still and rampant alcohol use by both white settlers and local Tlingit Indians. Only sparse assistance was provided via occasional visits from one of the three Revenue Service cutters assigned to the Pacific coast. By March 1879, it became clear that the Service did not have the authority or inclination to deal with more serious matters and first the British Navy sent the HMS *Osprey* to maintain order, followed by the American Navy that then governed for the next five years. Captain Robley Evans reported his frustration with the conditions he encountered as the first commander of a naval fleet sent to enforce the sealing treaties. 'The whole condition of Alaska, so far as the execution of the law is concerned, is a disgrace to our government, and I shall so report; but it will not do any good' (Evans, 1901, p. 341).

During this period, American missionary fervor turned its zeal northwards to Alaska, driven largely by the evangelical energy of Reverend Sheldon Jackson, the superintendent of the Presbyterian Missions in the territory. His recruits, both missionaries and teachers, were committed to governing Alaska society through religious conversion and the various administrative roles they assumed in the remote communities of maritime Alaska. The ships and officers of the Revenue Service were a counterweight to the influence of the clergy, though they also supported the missions by transporting supplies, personnel and even religious

statuary.

Legal Regime

The legacy of this history surfaces in the law enforcement and judicial powers invested in Coast Guard officers in the early 20th century, including those who served on The U.S. Coast Guard Cutter *Northland*. First Officers (Commanders and Captains) were sworn in as United States Commissioners and Second Officers (Lieutenant Commanders) as Deputy U.S. Marshals to fill the gap between such laws as were in effect and means of enforcing them. Initially, they were associated with one of the first three judicial divisions created in 1903 and based in Juneau, Saint Michaels, and Eagle City[18]. The restriction to a single district proved unworkable, due to the mobility of ships. The statutes governing the requirements for both U.S. Commissioners and Marshalls had to be modified as sea-going officers were not based in a fixed address as required by law.

JUDICIAL DISTRICTS POPULATION 1910

FIRST……..15,216

SECOND…12,351

THIRD…….20,978

FOURTH…16,711

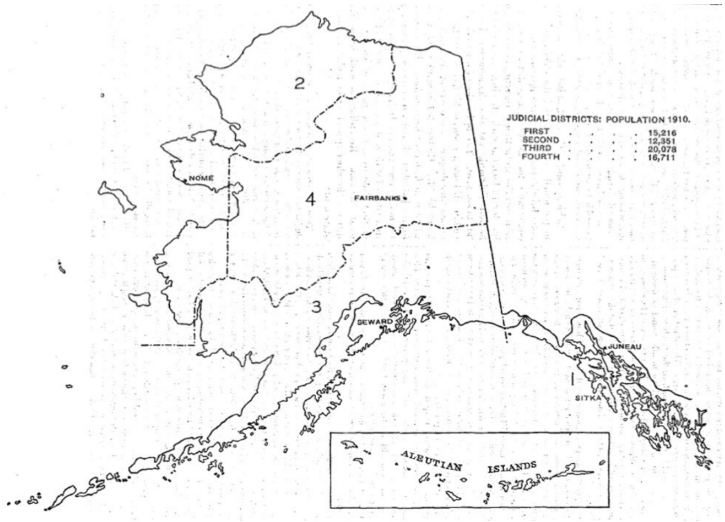


Figure 15. Judicial Districts c. 1910.
Source: Naske, 1985, p. 12.

[18] A fourth district was created in 1909, and the four seats were placed in Juneau, Nome, Valdez, and Fairbanks. . The Valdez district seat was moved to Anchorage in 1948. These districts, for all practical purposes, can be compared to counties in other American states.

The laws were amended for Alaska, as Attorney General Foley 'concluded that the commissioning of revenue cutter service officers would mean that the laws would be enforced in parts of Alaska where it was little known or regarded' (Naske, 1985, p. 9). Serving in the front-line of the judicial process, a United States Commissioner often represented an individual's first contact with the administration of federal justice. Administrative activities, such as handing out game regulations to Alaska Natives, were punctuated with more lively interventions. One woman who grew up in Nome remembered, 'Gambling and drunken carousing went on around the clock. Fights were common and men were knifed and shot by the light of the midnight sun. Few arrests were made for murder and other crimes. The law could hold criminals, if there were jails enough to hold them, until the revenue cutter arrived during its patrols of the North, for they were the enforcers of the law' (Pinson, 2004, p. 21).

As the officers assumed law enforcement duties, the ships themselves were enrolled in this frontier justice system as 'floating courts'. A combination of adventurous judges and the expense of transporting the accused and witnesses to one of the district courts led to the emplacement of court personnel (judges, attorneys and sometimes juries) on seasonal cruises and the transformation of ship-spaces into court rooms. Thus '…indicting the accused in Nome, securing a conviction and returning the witnesses, all to be done before the close of the two months navigation season, entailed heavy expenses' (Naske, 1985, p. 12). The Revenue Cutter service saved money.

The Maritime Context of the Bering Sea Patrol

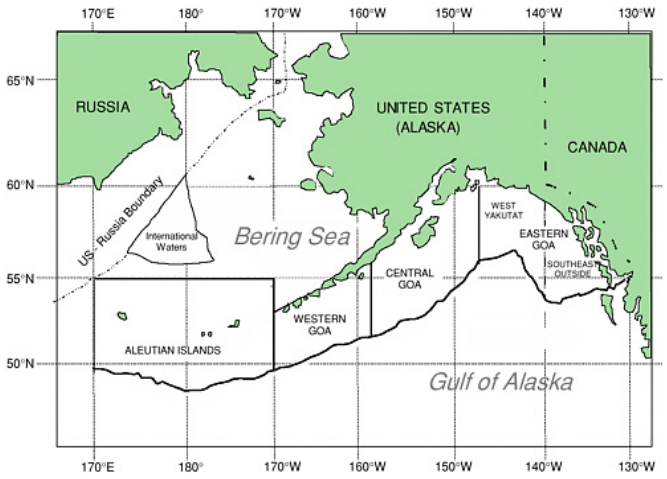


Figure 16. Bering Sea Patrol Area.
Source: Pacific Northwest Coast Guard Museum, Seattle.

The Bering Sea Patrol was initiated in 1880 and continued until 1895. Its seasonal cruises typically lasted from May to October with the majority of sea days spent in the Bering Sea, where dates and routes were dependent on the state of the cryosphere[19] (sea ice conditions, most particularly). It covered a vast coastal, island and pelagic area extending from the Aleutian Islands north to the Arctic Ocean, far above the Arctic Circle. The patrol was bounded by the liminal coastline of Alaska to the east and the international dateline to the west where Big Diomede Island and Little Diomede Island separate the Russian Federation from the United States by approximately 2 nautical miles (as delimited in the purchase treaty).[20] Very little progress was made in advancing knowledge of the maritime geographies of the patrol area from 1880 to the period when *Northland* joined the patrol. Regarding navigation in the Bering Sea, the United States Coast Pilot for the year 1931 stated:

> *'Excepting a few localities, this territory has not been surveyed, and the charts of it are only compilations from various sources, with corrections made from later information received; the charts are necessarily imperfect and must not be followed implicitly, especially when in the vicinity of the coast. Then too, the currents are much influenced by the winds, and are imperfectly known and difficult to predict, so that positions by dead reckoning are uncertain and safety depends upon constant vigilance'.*
>
> - Coast Pilot, 1931, p. 301.

This description reflects the barren state of western geographic and cartographic knowledge of this region during the duration of *Northland's* Bering Sea Patrol service *and* acknowledges its unpredictable environmental conditions. Corresponding sources of indigenous knowledge convey similar caution. Frank Andrew, a Native Alaskan from the Yup'ik village of Kwigillingok, discusses the way that he was taught about the sea by the elders:

> *'We were taught about everything having to do with our land on the coast, the area around our village. But even though they taught us, they told us that we will not learn the ocean. They said the ocean cannot be learned. They said it is not like the land. They said the surface of the land doesn't move and cannot float away or melt. They said on the contrary, the ocean freezes during the winter, and ice piles up in different places, and the ice melts during summer and goes. There is no set time in the spring when it breaks up and no certain date. That is why they said the ocean does not tell us what it is going to do…'*
>
> - Frank Andrew, Sr., *Bering Sea Elders*, 2011, p. 8.

[19] The cryosphere encompasses the frozen water at the earth's surface, including glaciers, ice sheets, sea ice, lake and river ice, permafrost, seasonal snow and ice crystals. See glaciologist Sean Marshall's primer *The Cryosphere* for an encapsulation of the concept (Marshall, 2012).

[20] Note that there is a small portion of the sea that is classified as international waters and known as 'the Bering Sea donut hole.'

THE BERING SEA

> *'This patrol [Bering Sea Patrol] has been an important one in the history of our service and is one of the main arteries in the Coast Guard's official body'.*
>
> – Commander F.A. Zeusler, 15 September 1937. Letter to Commander Bering Sea Patrol Force.

Contemporary oceanographers estimate the 'Bering Sea covers an area of approximately 878,000 square miles and is the world's third largest semi-enclosed sea'.[21] 'Although vast, most of the wide eastern shelf that makes up half the sea is extremely shallow, less than two hundred feet in depth in many places. In contrast, the basin extending toward Russia and the western Aleutians can drop off to depths that exceed ten thousand feet' (Alexander, 2001, p. 182). The distances involved dictated extensive cruise miles beginning with the first patrol commanded by Captain Robley Evans, whose compilation of the miles travelled of the six ships under his command made a lasting impression.

> *'I have just completed my table of distances made by the fleet under my command. The distance covered by all ships since leaving Port Townsend is sixty-one thousand four-hundred and twenty-six miles, of which thirty-eight thousand three hundred and ninety-eight miles have been in the Bering Sea. Nothing like this work has been done since the civil war closed and I hope the Department may be as well pleased with it as I am'.*
>
> - Robley Evans, 1901, p. 60.

The weather system in the Bering Sea produces thick fog, severe winds and mobile sea ice, what one observer termed the 'maximum atmospheric vigor' of the Bering Sea (Hunt, 1975, p. 338). It is a particularly challenging environment for ship operations and causes considerable discomfort for those on board, the degree of which is specific to the ship's sea-keeping and ice handling capabilities. On board Evans' ship, one officer swore the fog, 'was so dense that it slowed the vessel down running against it' (Evans, 1901, p. 336). The ice in the open Bering Sea was composed of detached fields, floes (floating ice) and cakes (floating ice less than 10m across) which the wind and currents act on to break it up, pile it up and move it in a constant dance of wind, sea and ice.

[21] The Mediterranean is approximately 965,300 mi² and the Caribbean Sea is approximately 971,000 mi².

The usual aids to navigation were virtually nonexistent in the first half of the 20th century. When encountering typical low viability conditions, the Coast Pilot suggested mariners follow the birds. That is, 'All of the rocky islands and rocky cliffs of the mainland are frequented by thousands of birds, whose numbers, constant cries, and flight may serve to indicate the approach to these places in thick weather'. It further warns of the shallowness of the shores and advises navigators following near to the coastline (coasting) to constantly follow the 'leads' (United States Coastal Pilot, 1932, p. 302). Leads are defined as navigable passages through *floating ice* (Armstrong *et al.,* 1966, p. 28).

Ice Navigation

Figure 17. Stern view, N*orthland* in ice, 1934. Source: Alaska State Library Historical Collection, Juneau.

Figure 18. *Northland* breaking ice, Arctic Ocean 1933. Source: Naval History and Heritage Command, Washington, D.C.

One of the officers on board was usually designated the 'Ice Master,' the person responsible for determining the best possible route through ice while underway. The Bering Sea Patrol ships' logs, including those of *Northland*, are filled with entries that demonstrate the impact of this climate on the ships' ability to adhere to a particular schedule, approach an anchorage or perform core functions such as reaching a ship in distress.[22] One Bering Sea Patrol commander summarized his experience of the weather in an annual report:

[22] Many of the BSP Ship's Logs are digitized and available for viewing from the (U.S.) National Archives website.

'In the autumn, generally about November 1, Bering Sea begins to take on a covering of slush ice. Sometime later the Arctic ice pack, a solid field forming hundreds of square miles in extent, soon covers the sea. In the spring those immense fields of ice float gently out to sea and are carried northward by the currents. The field passes through Bering Strait, the narrow strip of water between the easternmost point of Asia and the westernmost point of Alaska Mainland. The Croaking, crushing noise can be heard for a great distance. On days when the Arctic sun is shining, after the ice has left, the landscape and the seascape present a pretty view. The tundra on the shore is brown and green, and the air is filled with summer hear while pretty wildflowers adorn the foothills, But quite often, without notice, the scene changes. Black lowering clouds obscure the sun, heavy winds lash the sea and large, white-capped waves crash on the beach. The thunder of the surf can be heard for miles. The ships in the [Nome] Roadstead must wear more chain on their anchors and for a while they try to ride out the storm, but when the anchors begin dragging they run for safety in the lee of Sledge Island or go off to sea. Often the gale blows for three or four consecutive days'.

- Commander F.A. Zeusler, 1935, Bering Sea Patrol Report.

This, then, was the marine operating environment for the US Revenue Service/Coast Guard in the Territory of Alaska. The resident population was also a significant aspect of the context for the service.

POPULATIONS IN THE BERING SEA PATROL LOCALE

Alaska Natives

The indigenous populations of the Bering Sea and Arctic coast of Alaska are broadly referred to as belonging to one of three groups: Inupiaq, Y'upik, or Cup'ik peoples. These designations roughly correspond to the family of languages specific to each group,[23] and the term 'Alaska Native' refers to any person with a tribal affiliation to any of these groups. Tinglit and Athabaskan groups are not discussed here as they lived in the interior or Southeast Alaska and were not in contact with the cutter.

[23] The term 'Eskimo' or 'Esquimo' was an identity created by western explorers and is used here only in quotes or references.

Figure 19. Traditional Territories of Alaska Native Cultures.
Source: Decolonizing Alaska Exhibit in the Museum of the Far North, Fairbanks, 2018.

White incursion into their lands and seas by whalers, fishing fleets and fur seal hunters resulted in epidemics of disease and alcohol abuse among these groups. The Captain of the *Corwin* concluded that he could track the points of first contact by the negative consequences on the local indigenous populations that ensued.

According to the 1920 Census, 15,710 Native Alaskans (referred to as 'Indian' in the census documents) were living in the area of the patrol in 1920, which equaled 60% of the population as enumerated under the 'language stock' categories of 'Aleut' and 'Eskimauan' (U.S. Census Bureau, Alaska Census Bulletin, 1920).[24] These initial contacts were a consequence of resource appropriation, but as the U.S. government moved in to govern not only resources, but people and land as well, the effects deepened.

> '*Outsiders moved in and took control of our lands and resources, they'd brought another crushing burden: the heavy hand of government over our lives. With outsider control came Outsider demands. My family and I were supposed to learn a new language, adopt profoundly different notions of private property; we were supposed to adjust our communal society to one based on capitalism, self-interest and individual choice. Even before statehood, the effort to change Native Alaskans into proper 'Americans' was starting up. A joint project of the Christian missionaries and the U.S. government.'*
>
> – William Hensley, 2010, p. 6.

[24] The 1920 census estimated the overall proportion of Alaska Natives as 48.2% (coastal and interior populations), a decrease from 80.1% in 1900 and 68.2% in 1910.

The Revenue Service/Coast Guard was one of the primary delivery mechanisms for these consequences as well as perhaps more positive contributions. I address the specific experiences of Alaska Natives, such as those living on St. Lawrence Island and Little Diomede Island, further in the analytical pauses in which they are key actants.

Non-Natives

The non-native population consisted of military personnel, whalers, traders, miners, government officials, teachers, missionaries and business owners. As with Alaska Natives, I discuss the specific experiences of non-natives in the analytical pauses.

THE COAST GUARD MISSION IN TERRITORIAL ALASKA

In Territorial Alaska, the Revenue Service/Coast Guard undertook unprecedented assignments in a difficult maritime context serving a sparse and mostly unfamiliar population over vast distances. It began with essentially a mandate centered on resource management but expanded far beyond that purpose over time.

> *'Fisheries patrol, Bering Sea Patrol or any other patrol to my mind does not only consist only of cruising and scouting, but it consists of helping fishing vessels, other vessels and the people encountered in every possible way, medically, practically and scientifically, and therefore every cruise should consist of more than just a series of lines'.*
>
> - Commander F.A. Zeusler, 1938, p. 3.

The Revenue Service was at first charged with enforcing whaling, sealing and fisheries regulations in the southern Bering Sea, as well as the core responsibilities of protecting life and property at sea and customs enforcement. The Pribilof Islands were the only breeding grounds of fur seals, but the population had been decimated with an estimated 200,000 killed in a single year. Congress passed an act forbidding the killing on July 27, 1868 and obligated the Secretary of the Treasury 'to prevent the killing of any fur seal until it shall be otherwise provided by law' (15 Stat. 241). Alaska Natives were permitted to take just the number required for subsistence. A

subsequent act created the Alaska Game Commission on January 13, 1925,[25] and assigned the Coast Guard to enforce the Commission's regulations regarding fisheries. The Coast Guard was also charged with enforcing those regulations relating to 'firearms, ammunition, and spiritous liquors in Alaska'.[26]

Before the Bering Sea Patrol was formally established, the first Revenue Service Cutter entered Alaska waters in 1871. The cutter *Lincoln* made three intermittent cruises under the command of Calvin L. Hooper. In 1880, Hooper was assigned to command the cutter *Corwin* and began regular seasonal cruises venturing further north to the Arctic Ocean, assigned to locate several missing ships and enforce restrictions on pelagic seal hunting. In 1895 he became the first commander of the Bering Sea Patrol (Nobel & Strobridge, 1986, pp. 76-7). Cutters ventured northward to rescue ice-bound whalers near Point Barrow in 1897, deliver medicines to villages during the flu epidemics in 1917-1918, and provided transportation for reindeer to establish herding in order to curtail the hunting and gathering lifestyle of indigenous people. A smallpox epidemic in Nome prompted USCG cutter *Nunivak* commander Cantwell to convince the US Army commander at St. Michael to declare a quarantine to prevent ships from Nome heading up the Yukon River and spreading the disease inland and enforced the quarantine blockade (Nobel & Strobridge, 1986, p. 80). The cutter *Bear* was the most famous and infamous of the patrol ships as was its Captain Michael A. 'Hell-Roaring' Healy. The *Northland*, as described in the introduction to this thesis, was purpose-built to replace the *Bear*. It was intended as a modernization yet carried imprints of its predecessor embedded in its design and echoed in its mission.

THE USCG CUTTER *NORTHLAND*

The theory discussion argued that the affordances of a particular ship (and its unique character) emerge from the basic characteristics of 'shipness' as nuanced by individual design, materials, technologies and construction methods. To understand the nature of *Northland's* participation in the Bering Sea Patrol, it is useful to

[25] January 13, 1925 (43 Stat. 739).
[26] July 27, 1868 (15 Stat. 241).

understand the materiality and geographies of its ship-spaces. I came to know *Northland's* lines and geometries through the model-making work. Working to scale, I worked with the blueprints to read every label and understand how the configuration was planned. To build the investigative models, I retraced the drawing using a 3-D printing pen and filament. This effort built a spatial map in my memory that I used to visualize particular places on board, or the location of events and activities mentioned in the ship's logs and accounts from officers, passengers and Alaska Natives.

This section will acquaint readers with the icebreaker's core design using excerpts from the ship's drawings and more detailed descriptions of certain characteristics, spaces and usage are discussed in the analytical pauses that follow. All of the illustrations are derived from ship blueprints acquired from the Pacific Northwest Coast Guard Museum in Seattle, Washington.

> *'Ask any of the government officials, natives, traders, which vessel does the outstanding work in the Bering Sea Patrol and you will have the same response from all, 'the good Northland'*
>
> - Commander F.A. Zuesler, 1938, p. 5.
>
> -
>
> *'She wasn't big. She wasn't fast. She wasn't pretty. But she was lucky. Ice was her love, and ice bent her rudder, her propeller, and her pride – but not her spirit. We loved that old bucket'*
>
> - Commander Ken Bilderback, 1954, p. 2.

'New Vessel for Bering Sea Patrol to be the Strongest, For Its Size, Ever'.

- American Society of Naval Engineers, 1926, p. 23.

Length overall	216 feet 0 inches
Length on waterline	200 feet 0 inches
Beam, molded	39 feet 0 inches
Depth, molded at lowest point of sheer	24 feet 9 inches
Draft, designed mean, with 64,000 gallons fuel oil, 50 tons coal, 16,000 gallons fresh water, 60 tons stores and 20 tons cargo	15 feet 0 inches
Displacement at above draft	2050 tons
Speed, designed trial, with 30,000 gallons fuel oil, 25 tons coal, 8000 gallons fresh water, 30 tons stores and 10 tons cargo	11 knots per hour
Shaft horsepower, estimated, at above speed and loading	1000

NOTE—The figures given above under "draft" represent the approximate total capacities of bunkers and tanks.

Figure 20. Specification from engineering drawings, 1925.
Source: Pacific Northwest Coast Guard Museum, Seattle.

Design

The design of the American-designed-and-built ship signalled important developments in naval shipbuilding, yet its original configuration is testimony to the tensions between strongly held beliefs rooted in past practices and forward-looking technologies. The ship it was to replace was that wooden-hulled Clyde-built whaler cum USCG cutter the *Bear*. An article in the *Journal of the American Society of Naval Engineers*, published when the specification for the new vessel was released for bidding purposes, testifies as to the novelty of certain aspects of the ship's original design.

> *'An inspection of the plans reveals a ship of most unique design, quite different from any preceding Coast Guard vessels. So far as the hull is concerned the outstanding requirement is the ability to navigate in heavy ice and withstand the enormous pressures of entangling ice flows. To this end the forefoot is cut away to above the waterline and all the shell plating at or near the latter is of exceptionally heavy scantling, with a maximum thickness of 1 1/4 inches at the bow. Supporting this heavy shell is a framing system of extraordinary strength and* stiffness'.
>
> - *American Society of Naval Engineers,* 1926, p. 343.

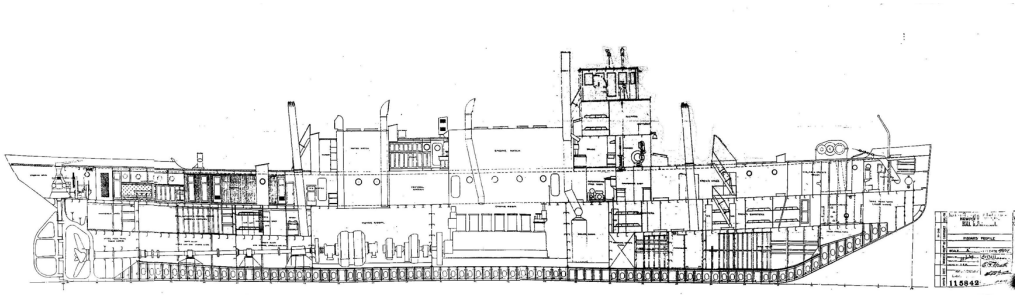


Figure 21. Original Configuration Inboard Profile, 1925.
Source: Pacific Northwest Coast Guard Museum, Seattle.

The requirements for ice operations were developed through a combination of expert advice and mathematical calculation. In Chalmers' Design of Ships' Structures (1993), the role of ice-loads and the anticipated ice conditions are essential data when designing for arctic conditions:

> *"Ice loads will dominate the local structural design of a warship hull in all but the very lightest of conditions. Therefore, an 'ice capable' ship, that is a ship that has some ice breaking capability as opposed to resistance to the impact of reasonably loose ice, the stipulation of any ice capability will affect the structural design and weight. It is therefore important that the extent of ice operations expected and the ice conditions to be used in design, based upon the projected area of operations (and average and maximum speeds), are defined clearly'.*
>
> - Chalmers, 1993, p. 60.

The *Journal's* announcement further takes note that, 'The propelling machinery of the new cutter marks an even greater departure…than the hull. The Diesel-electric

system of propulsion is to be used and all auxiliaries and deck machinery will be electrically driven, steam being used only for heating, cooking and as a visual signal in conjunction with air whistles or horns' (JASNE). This system, designed and manufactured by GE, was procured directly by the government to be provided to the shipyard that secured the contract, a practice unusual for its time. Although the documents aren't explicit on this point, this move was likely motivated by a need to exert control over a process that included so much innovation. This aspect of the design was a response to the requirement to cruise long distances without access to fuel, a capability Commander Zeusler referenced when advocating for the ship's continuation of service in the Arctic. 'The fact that she can remain so long at sea without refuelling is a most valuable asset' (Zeusler, 1938, p. 3).

Newport News Ship Building and Dry Dock Company won the bid, and the contract required the shipyard to skill-up its workforce and construction methods. This was the first hull of its kind produced in the US; a double-hulled steel and cork-lined ice-hardened cutaway. It was assembled not with the usual rivets but with welded seams producing a heavy, robust structure with a bow shape that traded speed for improved ice-handling characteristics. At some point between the release of the bid documents and the construction of the ship, there was a substantial addition to the plans. No mention of a sailing rig appears in those initial bid documents, yet the original configuration, as built, includes a *hermaphrodite brigantine rig.*[27] One history of Coast Guard Vessels merely notes 'Full sail rig was provided in the event of damage to the propeller' (Canney, 1995, p. 97). Archival material (both primary and secondary sources) suggests that the sailing rig was added at the behest of the 'old guard' within the leadership of the Coast Guard. They believed it was necessary for conditions in which ice might foul the engines and sail power could be called upon to extricate the ship from dangerous conditions. It produced a vessel that literally embodied a transition from the previous century whaler-inspired Arctic vessels to modern 20th-century versions.

From the original design and the photographs of the first several years of *Northland's* service, one could mistake her for a vessel that was built squarely in the

[27] A Brigantine Rig refers to the configuration of foremast sails (front-most mast of the ship) as fully square-rigged.

age of sail. With three full masts and a Brigantine rig, she seemed an almost seamless replacement for the USCG *Bear*, rather than a 20th century cutter. But the consequence of including the sailing rig was not only the embodiment of a maritime anachronism; it had serious consequences for the ship's sea-keeping characteristics.

Northland's Configuration with Brigantine Sailing Rig

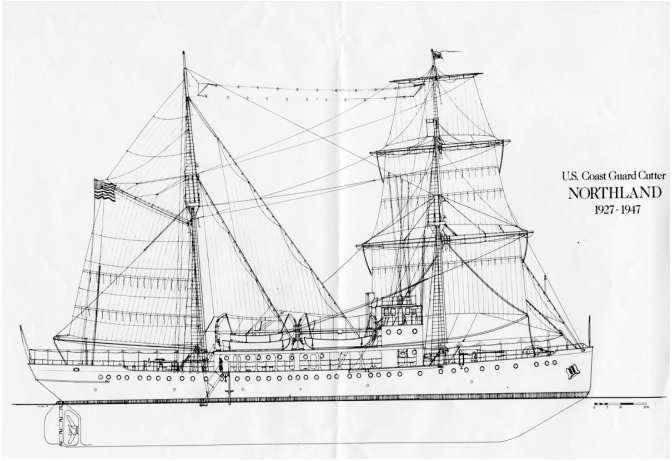


Figure 21. *Northland* Original Configuration c. 1927.
Source: United States Coast Guard Historian's Office, Washington, D.C.

Figure 22. *Northland* under sail c. 1928.
Source: Naval History and Heritage Command, Washington, D.C.

Once the ship was in service, it became clear that the build produced incompatibilities between engine and sail power that rendered the sailing rig not only ineffective, but detrimental to the manoeuvring of the ship. Reports describe attempts to hold a course while under sail as 'simply impossible'. The journalist Max Miller commented:

> *'The Northland alone seemed not to have a nickname except when occasionally referred to as 'The Rock and Roll.' Being a Government experiment as an icebreaker, the Northland had no keel worth mentioning, nor rolling chalks. Coupled with this, its high and absolutely useless masts, made the vessel top-heavy. It would roll in a ripple. It would roll just out of habit'*
>
> - Max Miller, 1936, p. 244.

In 1931, the masts were cut down and the sails removed (Ship's Log[28], 1 January 1931). Evidence from incidents recorded in the ship's logbooks and discussed in the analytical pauses help explain this drastic modification of core ship structure.

[28] The Ship's Logbooks from *Northland* are held at the National Archives in Washington, D.C. Unless otherwise noted, all references with the format '(Ship's Log, Day Month Year)' are associated with the reference: United States National Archives Record Group 26. 26.3 *RECORDS OF THE REVENUE CUTTER SERVICE AND ITS PREDECESSORS 1790-1933* (bulk 1790-1915) Boxes 1707 – 1736 (USCG Cutter Northland).

The Interior

The interior of the ship followed naval spatial conventions regarding personnel. Horizontally, two interior berth decks provided accommodation for officers and crew. The Main Deck housed officers in order of rank from forward most for the commander to aft for the junior engineer. It also housed workspaces such as the Carpenter's Shop and communal spaces such as Ward Room and Crew washrooms. Pipe berths for sailors (enlisted men) were situated on the lower Berth Deck along with food storage amidships and equipment lockers aft. None of these decks were cambered.

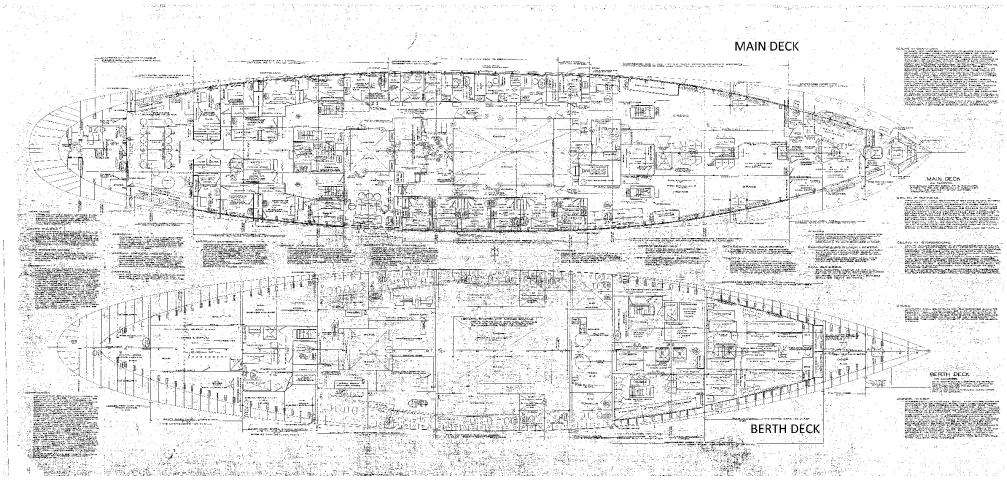


Figure 22. Main and Berth Deck Blueprints, 1925.
Source: Pacific Northwest Coast Guard Museum, Seattle.

The Upper Deck, along with being the main spaces of activity when under way, contained the Captain's State Room and the offices of the dentists and doctors who were to travel on Coast Guard cruises as part of the US Public Health Service. It also contained the Officer's Mess, food prep, laundry room and watch room. These structures did not enclose the entire deck; the fore and aft spaces were open. The camber on this deck is specified as 9.5" in 38-0' to ensure water that crossed the deck was disposed of through the scuppers along the edge of the deck.

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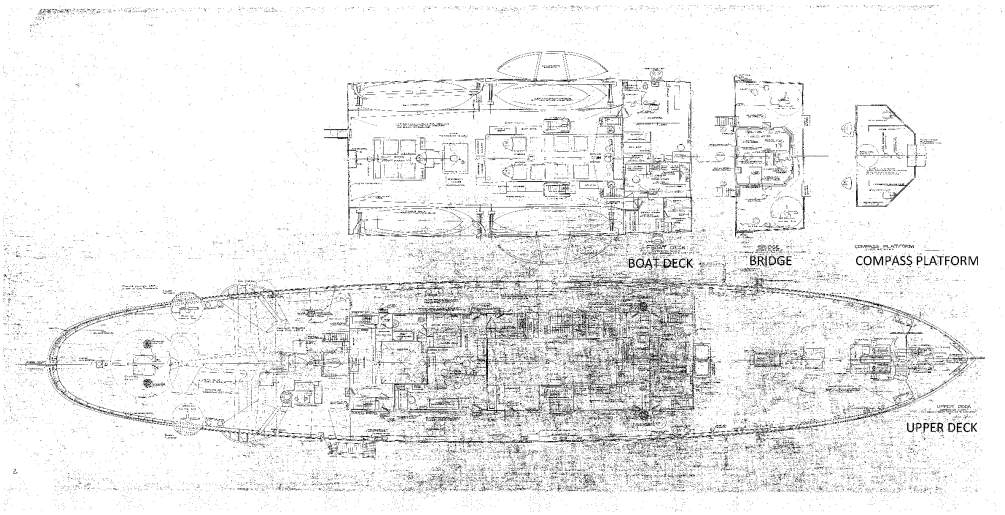


Figure 23. Boat Deck, Bridge, Compass Platform and Upper Deck Blueprints, 1943.
Source: Pacific Northwest Coast Guard Museum, Seattle.

The Boat Deck housed the small boats and hoisting davits, enabling crews to lower them to the water. The space under the Bridge was allocated to the hospital, sickbay, chart and radio rooms. The Bridge was the control center of the ship, location of the ship's wheel, compass and lighting system. The Compass Platform is self-explanatory.

The Outboard Profile illustrates the deck levels, and the connections across spaces for engines and control equipment. The size of the engine, motor and boiler rooms show the extent to which the movement of the ship is governed within spaces that are relatively large compared with spaces of human habitation and labor. The structure of the ship must accommodate both material and human volume within its confines. This explains why even on the largest ships, 'their interiors are cramped. Stairs are near vertical; corridors are narrow; and berths are stacked three high' (Votolato, 2011, p. 131).

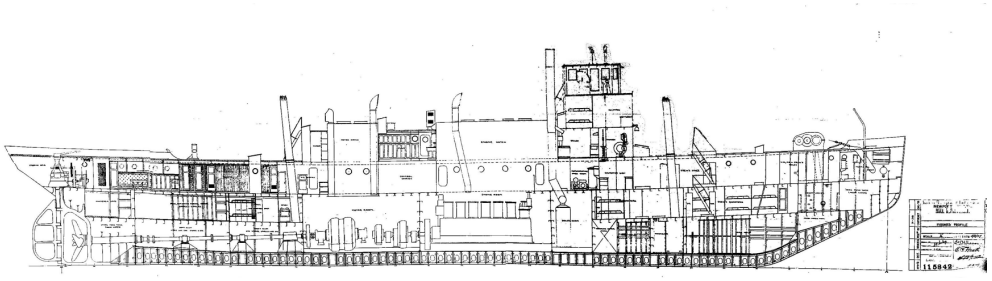


Figure 24. Inboard Profile Blueprint, 1925.
Source: Pacific Northwest Coast Guard Museum, Seattle.

On *Northland*, these cramped spaces were reified on a ship armoured against arctic ice conditions by that heaviest double-steel hull built ever built, but like any other well-designed ship it sought equilibrium and to right itself in the heaviest seas. The material vitality of the ship as manifested in the USCG Cutter *Northland*'s design, materials, spaces and ship dynamics played a vital role in countless moments, large and small, in which it participated; '…a materiality that is as much force as entity, as much energy as matter, as much intensity as extension' as proposed by Jane Bennett. The ship exemplifies her argument that objects are neither stable nor passive but 'vibrant' participants in a…distributive agency 'that arises from the properties of agentic assemblage composed of human and nonhuman elements' (Bennett, 2010, p. 20). This is the ship that joined the Bering Sea Patrol in 1927. It began its first seasonal in August, rather than May, due to construction delays and issues discovered on its shake down cruise. Its duties on that first cruise illustrate Bering Sea Patrol responsibilities and include the first Analytical Pause, the inspection of Bogsolof Island, the volcanic 'Mystery Island'.

ALASKA PAUSE I – VOLCANIC RESISTANCE OF BOGOSLOF ISLAND

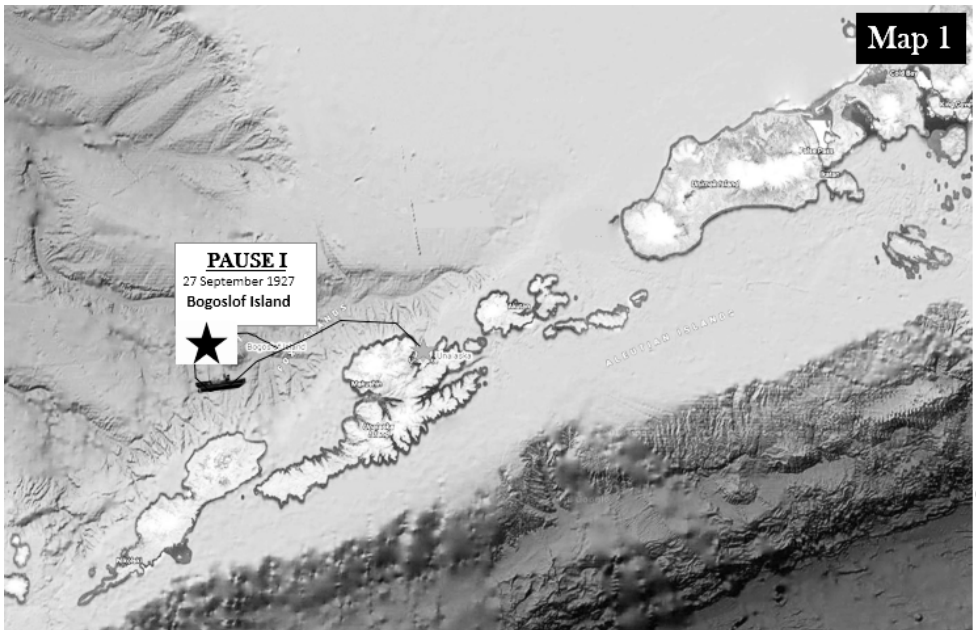


Figure 25. Alaska Pause Map 1: Bogoslof Island
Source: Author. Created 2018.

'And so to begin' Northland's First Bering Sea Patrol Cruise.

The *Northland* was attached to the Bering Sea Patrol arrival at Unalaska in the Aleutian Islands on September 9, under the command of Captain J.F. Hottell, with nine Officers, six Warrant Officers and 85 enlisted men aboard. The seasonal cruise ended only two months later on November 6, 1927 when it was formally detached from the patrol, a considerably shorter duration than normal. The first eleven days were spent in port. Entries in the ship's logbook suggest this interlude was used as a 'shake down' period to secure discipline and ship readiness for the rigors of imminent Arctic conditions. After delivering 41 bags of mail to the Postmaster and laying a wreath at the grave of a former seaman from the cutter *Rush* (Ship's Log, 8 September 1927), the men were largely consumed with drills, quarters and ship inspections. The commanding officer convened Deck Courts to adjudicate on various transgressions of crewmembers while on liberty (shore) leave and to investigate thefts - a pocket watch and a pistol, holster and belt (Ship's Log, 13 September 1927). In most ways, the crews' lived experience on *Northland* was virtually

indistinguishable from life on a naval vessel, despite operating under a technically civilian branch of government.

According to the left-hand page entries in two the ships log books for 1927 (and every other patrol cruise year) the magazine was inspected daily without exception while the ship was in service. The cutters were lightly armed, and 'keeping the powder dry' was paramount for ship safety as well as readiness for the use of the armament. All other drills might be suspended due to weather, ship motion, or shore duties. Not this one. The magazine was a watertight compartment that held highly flammable ordnance. The inspection tested the temperature of the compartment and results were listed in the daily log. Several times a week, the magazine's floodcocks were also tested. These valves enabled the crew to quickly flood just the compartment with seawater in case of an emergency and drain it afterwards. Other safety drills focused on ship and crew including drills for fire, resuscitation, boats (under oar and under sail), gun and abandon ship procedures. Quartermasters and coxswains also held specialized signal drills[29]. General musters (whole crew gatherings) were also held periodically both on deck and dock. 'Quarters' were inspections of crew accommodations and were carried out most days. Every Saturday, the commanding officer carried out an extensive inspection of the entire ship. Deck Force seamen cleaned, painted and polished the steel, brass and decks while in port, but on Sunday, only the magazine inspection was undertaken.

'Six Days shalt thou labor and do all thou art able,
And on the seventh—holystone the decks and scrape the cable'.
- 'Philadelphia Catechism'.

[29] Audible signal drills were used to initiate procedures such as 'man overboard', 'lower lifeboats' 'call to fire stations' or 'abandon ship.' The Quartermasters and Boatswains carried the signal kit, memorized each signal and were prepared to sound them when ordered to do so.

Drill and Muster

Figure 26. *Northland* crew signal drill and Muster on Unalaska dock, C. 1936-1938.
Source: Alan G. May Collection, Alaska Consortium Library, Anchorage.

The demands of ship maintenance and crew discipline were offset while in port by 'liberty' shore leave granted in turn to port and starboard watch crews on alternate nights or days. Failure to return on time carried serious consequences. A Coast Guard Summary Court judgment #3240 found M.M.1c. James B. Donellan guilty of absence from duty after leave had expired and sentenced to be dishonorably discharged from the United States Coast Guard and to forfeit one month's pay amounting to $92.40. Donellan had applied for a transfer from before the ship departed from the Coast Guard dock in Maryland, but was denied. He had sworn he would not 'sail to that god-forsaken wasteland', and one day he never returned from leave (Ship's Log, 8 September 1927). Members of the crew that did sail to Alaska accrued a number of liberty deadline violations. While docked in Unalaska, several were 'Called to the Mast' and subsequently the Commanding Officer's Deck Court returned guilty verdicts for overleave for Walter F. Cross. CGM (a), Marcus Ramsey, F.1c, Edward J. McFadden, Sea 1c., and Edmund Van Ninan, Sea,2c. each was docked $15 pay. Grover C. Cartwright, Sea.1.c, was fined $30 and Edward Berg, C.M.M. was fined the same amount for drunkenness on duty (Ship's Log, 3 October 1927).[30]

The performance (and consequences) of naval hierarchies and regimentation created and recreated ship spaces such as those of *Northland* as it stood in port to

[30] The Coast Guard used a naval ratings system, is a hierarchical ranking of individuals by class (1c = first class) and by role (Sea = seaman, the most basic category of sailor).

produce a particularly maritime version of habitus. In the sense that Casey argues, wherein 'A given habitus is always enacted in a particular place and incorporates the features inherent in previous such places, all of which are linked by a habitudinal bond'. Casey continues to suggest, 'Habitus is also mediational in its capacity to bring together the placiality of its ongoing setting and the temporality of it recurrent enactment' (Casey, p. 2001, p. 86).

On the morning of 27th of September, the following people came on board for passage: Mrs. Helen Kasherov, Nina Kasherov, and Valentine Kasherov to St. George Island; Mrs. John Krukoff and John Krukoff to St. Paul Island and Bishop Ampahilophy to Nome. Then *Northland* was 'Unmoored from dock and remainder of watch spent in turning vessel off dock and entered the Bering Sea …at full speed, and so to the end of [Meridian] watch' (Ship's Log, 27 September 1927). Thus, *Northland* departed HQ at Unalaska to begin its first seasonal cruise where Arctic maritime weather, sea and ice conditions would test its capabilities and those of its crew to extend federal power in the Bering Sea Patrol area.

The environment was not so much a part of the Bering Sea Patrol assemblage as force acting constantly upon it, analogous to the force of the sea acting upon the ship. State power and the maritime context in Territorial Alaska were in constant contact. As Doreen Massey argued, human geographers must join with the natural sciences to make sense of the world; '…the carving up of the world and of scientific endeavor has been increasingly experienced as untenable…one of the most fortified of these old divides between knowledge has been that between the 'physical' and 'human' sciences' (Massey, 1999, p. 261). The vessel commenced its Bering Sea Patrol by investigating a volcanic 'mystery' island that had confounded multiple attempts to pin down its precise location, topography and composition from the moment it was sighted by Captain James Cook on October 29, 1769 (Zeusler, 1935, p. 50). The first analytical pause in *Northland's* sea tracks provides evidence to support her statement. The Ship's Log entry on September 27 at 2:05 p.m.: records that 'It was noticed that the formation of Bogoslof Island had radically changed from last reports. Slowed to standard speed. And steered various courses around these Islands taking still and moving pictures' (Zeusler, 1935, p. 50).

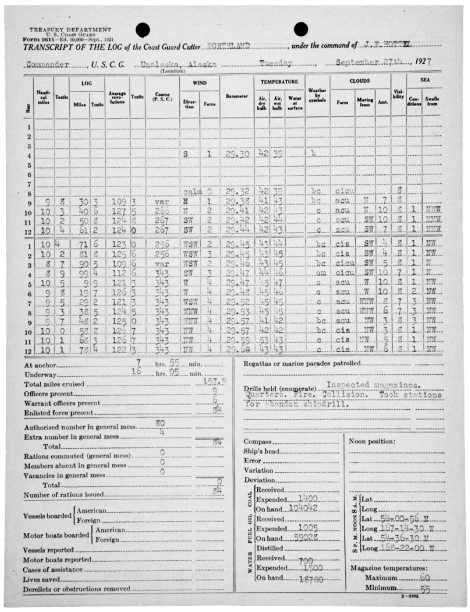
Nineteen years before *Northland's* excursion to Bogoslof, the Northern Commercial Company forwarded the following report from the Bering Sea:

> *'On the way down the RUSH had intended doing a little surveying around Bogoslof, but the navigating officer could not find the islands. The McCULLOCK, returning from Bogoslof, reports the disappearance of McCullock and Perry peaks. A reef adjoining Castle Rock now forms a small bay. We are not in possession of all the facts'.*
>
> - Branner, 1908, p. 480.

That the 'facts' about this speck of an island kept changing motivated Captain Hottell to take *Northland* approximately 60 nautical miles north of Unalaska to investigate the state of the island. The ship followed successive preceding visits by the Revenue Service's cutters *Corwin* (1873, 1881, 1884, 1885, 1898) *Grant* (1890, 1891, 1896) *Perry* (1906, 1910*), McCullock* (1907), *Rush* (1908, 1909), *Tahoma* (1910) *Manning* (1911), and *Algonquin* (1922). Archival evidence suggests one reason for scrutiny on the part of the Revenue Service/Coast Guard derived from concerns the island's precise location had never been successfully charted, it had a reputation for appearing and disappearing from one year to the next. That perception only deepened the reputation of the island as a place of mystery, which for many of the Coast Guard visitors, was probably what drew them to it. Visitors, official and otherwise, expressed an ongoing fascination with this shape shifting volcanic phenomena, one that never seemed to hold still from one assessment to the next. The island itself appeared to be mobile and the only access to it was via ship mobility.

While on its course set for the Pribilof Islands, Bogoslof was *Northland's* first cruise stop - assuming the navigator could find it. Recall that in 1908, the navigator of the *Rush* was unable to locate it. The Volume II Coast Pilot Notes for Yakutat Bay to Arctic Ocean advises mariners that 'There is considerable doubt about the position of Bogoslof' (USCP, 1932, pp. 88-9). However, the Ship's Log 'Miscellaneous Events of the Day' notes the ship did reach the island and took still and moving pictures from various courses.

Ship's Log: September 27, 1927



TREASURY DEPARTMENT
U. S. Coast Guard
Form 2611—Ed. 10-26—Sept., 1921

TRANSCRIPT OF THE LOG of the Coast Guard Cutter NORTHLAND, under the command of J. F. HUTER,
Commander, U. S. C. G. Unalaska, Alaska (Location) Tuesday, September 27th, 1927

Hour	Nautical miles	Tenths	LOG Miles	Tenths	Average speed between hours	Tenths	Course (P. S. C.)	WIND Direction	Force	Barometer	TEMPERATURE Air, wet bulb	Air, dry bulb	Water at surface	Weather and remarks	CLOUDS Form	Moving from	Amt.	Visibility Conditions	SEA Smooth
1																			
2																			
3																			
4								S	1	29.30	42	50		h					
5																			
6																			
7																			
8								calm	0	29.38	42	50		hc	clou			8	
9	0	8	30	3	109	3	var	N	1	29.38	41	43		hc	nou	W	7	8	
10	10	3	140	6	127	6	256	W	2	29.41	40	43		c	nou	W	10	8	1	NW
11	10	2	50	8	124	6	267	SW	2	29.42	42	47		c	nou	SW	10	8	1	WNW
12	10	4	61	2	124	0	267	SW	2	29.44	42	43		c	nou	SW	7	8	1	WNW
1	10	4	71	6	123	0	256	WSW	2	29.45	41	44		hc	cio	SW	4	8	1	NW
2	10	2	93	8	125	6	256	WSW	3	29.45	41	45		hc	cio	SW	4	8	1	NW
3	8	7	20	5	102	6	var	WSW	2	29.42	43	45		hc	clou	SW	5	8	1	W
4	8	9	99	4	112	6	343	SW	3	29.47	44	46		oc	clou	SW	10	7	1	W
5	10	5	9	9	121	7	343	W	4	29.47	42	42		c	nou	W	10	8	1	NW
6	9	8	19	7	109	3	343	W	4	29.48	42	44		c	nou	W	10	8	2	NW
7	9	5	29	2	121	3	343	WSW	4	29.52	45	45		c	nou	WSW	8	7	3	NW
8	9	3	38	5	124	6	343	WSW	4	29.53	45	45		c	nou	WSW	6	7	3	NW
9	8	7	48	2	125	0	343	WSW	4	29.57	41	42		hc	nou	NW	3	8	3	NW
10	10	0	58	2	126	7	343	NW	4	29.57	42	42		hc	cis	NW	3	8	1	NW
11	10	1	68	3	122	7	343	NW	4	29.56	43	43		c	cis	NW	5	8	1	NW
12	10	1	78	4	122	3	343	NW	4	29.58	43	43		c	cis	NW	6	8	1	NW

At anchor ..... 7 hrs. 25 min.
Underway ..... 16 hrs. 35 min.
Total miles cruised 157.6
Officers present 6
Warrant officers present 0
Enlisted force present 74

Authorized number in general mess 80
Extra number in general mess 4
Total 84
Rations commuted (general mess) 0
Members absent in general mess 0
Vacancies in general mess 0
Total 0
Number of rations issued 84

Vessels boarded: American ..... Foreign .....
Motor boats boarded: American ..... Foreign .....
Vessels reported .....
Motor boats reported .....
Cases of assistance .....
Lives saved .....
Derelicts or obstructions removed .....

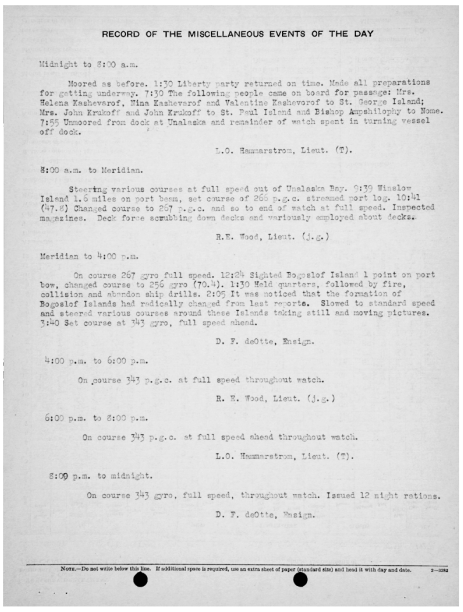
Regattas or marine parades patrolled .....
Drills held (enumerate) Inspected engineing. Quarters, fire, collision. Took stations for abandon ship drill.

Compass .....
Ship's head .....
Error .....
Variation .....
Deviation .....

FUEL OIL (GAL.): Received ..... Expended 1100 ..... On hand 124982
WATER: Received ..... Expended 1900 ..... On hand 18700

Noon position:
Lat .....
Long .....
Lat 54-00-56 N
Long 167-11-30 W
Lat 54-36-30 N
Long 166-22-00 W

Magazine temperatures: Maximum 60 ..... Minimum 55



RECORD OF THE MISCELLANEOUS EVENTS OF THE DAY

Midnight to 8:00 a.m.

Moored as before. 1:30 Liberty party returned on time. Made all preparations for getting underway. 7:30 The following people came on board for passage: Mrs. Helena Kashevarof, Nina Kashevarof and Valentine Kashevarof to St. George Island; Mrs. John Krukoff and John Krukoff to St. Paul Island and Bishop Aymilohpy to Nome. 7:55 Unmoored from dock at Unalaska and remainder of watch spent in turning vessel off dock.

L.O. Hammarstrom, Lieut. (T).

8:00 a.m. to Meridian.

Steering various courses at full speed out of Unalaska Bay. 9:39 Winslow Island 1.5 miles on port beam, set course of 266 p.g.c. streamed port log. 10:41 (47.0) Changed course to 267 p.g.c. and so to end of watch at full speed. Inspected magazines. Deck force scrubbing down decks and variously employed about decks.

R.W. Wood, Lieut. (j.g.)

Meridian to 4:00 p.m.

On course 267 gyro full speed. 12:24 Sighted Bogoslof Island 1 point on port bow, changed course to 256 gyro (70.4). 1:30 Held quarters, followed by fire, collision and abandon ship drills. 2:05 It was noted that the formation of Bogoslof Islands had radically changed from last reports. Slowed to standard speed and steered various courses around these Islands taking still and moving pictures. 3:40 Set course at 343 gyro, full speed ahead.

D. F. deOtte, Ensign.

4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

On course 343 p.g.c. at full speed throughout watch.

R. W. Wood, Lieut. (j.g.)

8:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

On course 343 p.g.c. at full speed ahead throughout watch.

L.O. Hammarstrom, Lieut. (T).

8:00 p.m. to midnight.

On course 343 gyro, full speed, throughout watch. Issued 12 night rations.

D. F. deOtte, Ensign.

Note.—Do not write below this line. If additional space is required, use an extra sheet of paper (standard size) and bind it with day and date.

Meridian to 4:00 p.m.

On course 267 gyro full speed. 12:24 Sighted Bogoslof Island 1 point on port bow, changed course to 256 gyro (70.4). 1:30 Held quarters, followed by fire, collision and abandon ship drills. It was noticed that the formation of Bogoslof Islands had radically changed from last reports.Slowed to standard speed and steered various courses around these Islands taking still and moving pictures. 3:40 Set course at 343 gyrao, full speed ahead.

D.F deOtte, Ensign

Figure 27. Ship's Log 27 September 1927.
Source: National Archives, Washington D.C.

The *Northland's* encounter with Bogoslof lasted only one hour and 35 minutes. In conjunction with prior and subsequent USCG investigations, even that brief inspection illuminates ways in which Bogoslof Island invited and resisted state-sanctioned scientific and cartographic efforts to fix its location, profile and contours both terrestrial and submarine. All this attention '…notwithstanding the fact that there are no reports the island had ever been inhabited by man but was only a hauling out place for sea lions and the home of thousands of birds, principally murre and sea gulls' (Zeusler, 1934, p. 50). Captain Cook sighted an 'elevated rock.' The actual island's birth was dramatic, as recorded by the Russian Missionary Father

Veniaminoff. The mobility of the island in the years that followed was equally dramatic.

Wrote Veniaminoff, 'on the 8th of May 1796, after a strong subterranean noise, with the wind fresh from the northwest, the new small black islet became visible through the fog; and from the summit great flames shot forth…Many masses of pumice stone were ejected on the first appearance of the island' (Zeusler, 1934, p. 50). After Alaska was ceded by Russia to the United States, US Navy Captain Robley Evans' ship was the first U.S. vessel to sight the island of Bogoslof. Evans reported it 'has not yet cooled off, to judge from the clouds of smoke constantly rising from its surface - not from one particular spot, like Vesuvius or Etna, but from the entire surface of the island, making a cone of steam, wafted by the wind this way or that, and reaching many hundreds of feet into the air. We saw it from a distance of forty miles, and soon after we passed it the fog shut down on us' (Evans, 1901, pp. 330-1). When the Revenue Service took over patrols from the Navy, the Revenue Cutter *Corwin* was the first of many to approach Bogoslof, and the first to formally survey it. Lieutenant John C. Cantwell and Lieutenant Doty produced an extensive report that documented vast changes in the island's appearance between their landing in 1884 and the last descriptions reported in 1873.

Cantwell's eloquent writings are reminiscent of memoirs by naturalists, like John Muir who had travelled on th*e Corwin* in 1881, members of the Harriman Expedition, and British botanist Isobel Hutchison. His report reads sometimes like that of a dispassionate geologist and elsewhere more an explorer's journal. As the ship approached the northern end of the island, 'The top [of the volcano] was hidden by the clouds of steam and smoke which issued not only from the crater but also poured forth with great violence from vents or areas in the sides of the cone. On the northeast side these apertures are particularly well defined'. Once on shore, they proceeded to climb the new Bogoslof cone up a gentle slope where the thin ash crust caused him to sink '…at first ankle-deep and later on knee-deep into a soft, almost impalpable dust which arose in clouds and nearly suffocated me'. They took the earth's temperature periodically as they ascended and at the summit in the crevice of a rampart, 'the mercury rapidly expanded and filled the tube, when the bulb burst, and shortly afterwards the solder used in attaching the suspension ring to the instrument was fused. We estimated the temperature at this point to be 500º

Fahrenheit'. As well as taking samples of rocks and angular measurements of the peaks, widths and lengths of from various points, his report includes observation of bird species (puffins, harlequin-ducks, gulls, kittiwakes) and notes the presence of 'curious and astonished' sea lions (United States Coast Guard, 1884, Cruise Report *Corwin*). This 1884 *Corwin* report is the most comprehensive and lyrical account in the archives.

When the cutter returned in 1885, it found little had changed in the interim but in 1898 found extensive erosion and in 1900 reported the island had cooled and a passage had formed between the two islands not less than 7 fathoms deep (Zeusler, 1934, p. 56). In early 1906 it was the Revenue Cutter *Perry's* turn to survey the island to document a new peak that had been reported the previous year. They named it 'Perry Peak.' Later that year, the cutter found another peak was filling in the gap between Perry Peak and Castle Island, making once again a single island out of two. In July 1907, the Revenue Cutter *McCullock* visited to confirm the peak had formed but found one peak had quickly half collapsed and that the channel between it and Castle Rock had been filled to an estimated height of 500 feet. By October the new peak, named 'McCullock Peak', was gone and a hot water lagoon appeared in its place. 'The average life of the two new peaks in the middle was about 10 months' (Zeusler, 1934, p. 57). In 1908 the Revenue Cutter *Rush* made another survey and found Perry Peak had disappeared, just two years after it had formed. Lieutenant Camden summarized what these extraordinarily rapid changes meant to observers:

> *'No such extraordinary story of growth and alteration of an island in the sea in a history that has lasted one hundred and eleven years has ever been told in the records of science before and the changes of the last sixteen months are unique in the records of volcanology'*
>
> - Lieutenant Camden, 1907, Revenue Cutter McCullock.

Scientists and adventurers were just as intrigued by the island's transformation as those from the cutters. Geologist T.A. Jagger, for one, joined a scientific expedition to Bogoslof in 1908. Like Cantwell, his write up expresses an effusive awe for the spectacles offered up by the island.

> *'In truth, it is a land – or an ocean – where the earth is alive, and continents are in the making. We are exploring the live crest, equivalent to a crater, of a great submarine heap of lava six thousand feet high, piled above the floor of Bering Sea where the Aleutian mountains fall off to the deep sea'.*
>
> – T.A. Jagger, 1908, p. 390.

'Lively the place was in every sense, the hot earth alive, having and heaping, the sea alive, currents and surf, and warm lagoons; the shore alive with the hundreds of immense clumsy leviathans, bulls, cows, and pups; and finally, the cliffs alive with their teeming bird-life'.

- T.A. Jagger, 1908, p. 396.

In 1909, the *Rush* found little had changed. The *Perry* returned in June 1910 to report two small islets in the lake had united and risen to a height of 185 feet above the lake level and the shore strip had risen about 10 feet in twelve months. 'On the new land the most active portion is on its west side where considerable sulphur fumes and boiling water are emitted from small holes in the ground' (Revenue Cutter *Perry,* 1910, Cruise Report). The *Perry's* visit was followed in September by the cutter *Tahoma*. Its officers recalculated the various heights and widths of the surviving and new landmasses but could not accurately measure Perry Peak 'as the base was enveloped in vapor and steam and the lagoon was steaming'.

One of the islands was unchanged, but the top and side of Castle Rock had split off in the recent eruption. The new land in the center, soft, sun-dried, cracked and steaming, had entirely changed its formation since the last observations were made. On the edge of the lagoon, they found an area of several hundred yards in 'violent agitation'. Boiling water spurt up through mud and produced dense steam and vapors and two pools of water were in a state of 'excessive ebullition'.[31] The ground had a 'treacherous character', which like Cantwell's encounter with the Bogoslof slope, could not be trusted with one's weight. And the birds were dead or gone, murre skeletons were scattered all over the island, roasted in the eruption. The sea lions, however, seemed as numerous as before (Zeusler, 1935, p. 58).

The Tahoma steamed away on September 14 for Attu, but the 19th, when the ship was about 25 miles southwest of Bogoslof, 'the officer-of-the-deck reported forked lightening in the northeast'. Captain Haake thought it 'very strange, as it was a beautiful clear night with a gentle northerly wind, and I immediately concluded …that it had something to do with Bogoslof. At daylight, my suspicion was confirmed. Perry Peak was in a state of eruption. A thick dark cloud hung over the island while at the same time a tongue of flame could be seen shooting up from the center. The cutter approached the island and then had to back off to avoid the ashes. The captain gathered samples and labeled them 'Specimen "K". The vapor

[31] 'Ebullition' is bubbling or boiling action.

formed a cloud of several thousand feet and assumed a mushroom appearance, 'resembling a huge white cauliflower.' It was an affective site. 'Officers and men stood on the deck fascinated with the magnificent spectacle, which was still further enhanced by the rays of the rising sun just peeping over Mount Makushin'.

The next cutter to visit Bogoslof was the *Manning* in 1911, commanded by Lieutenant Commander K.W. Perry. He adjusted the ship's route to visit the island and reported, 'one island had completely disappeared and the other greatly changed from its former appearance'. He landed a party and walked the shoreline to find the surface crusted and thickly perforated by fumeroles.[32] Perry put a finger in one and found it 'very hot,' so they 'hastened to the beach and aboard the ship'. Only a small herd of sea lions were spotted swimming along the shore. By 1916, the *McCullock* was back, as were the sea lions and thousands of murres; 'all the peaks are covered with young birds and broken eggshells'. They found the northeastern beach rough, broken and the rocks still warm to the touch. Fire Island had broken away. In September of 1922, the *Algonquin* returned to Bogoslof under the command of Captain W.T. Stromberg. It was his fifth visit to the island.

'Five times I have visited it. Five distinctly different views have I seen'. Stromberg found evidence of stability in the tufts of grass growing here and there and driftwood found on the beaches. He saw murres and seagulls in great numbers, in contrast with his first visit. In 1906, he recalled that, 'Everywhere there was evidence of one's insecurity from the effects of the enormous forces just beneath us. *Nothing was old, everything new*'. Now, in 1922, it seemed the island disappointed.

> *'Everything is tomb-like in its quietness, excepting the raucous squawking of the Murre and the discordant, attempted defiantly terrifying roar of the sea lions. The smoking peak is no more. The earth is cold, the water is cold, no vapors are to be seen. Nothing of interest remains save comparisons with what was. Excitement being less, more accurate data was obtained, though due to threatening weather conditions, our stay was all too short'.*
>
> - W.T. Stromberg in Zeusler, 1934, p. 62.

The *Northland* followed the sea tracks of these eight cutters to Bogoslof. Commander Hottel's annual report only briefly addressed the investigation. 'On

[32] 'Fumeroles' are vents of hot sulphurous gases.

September 27, 1927, the NORTHLAND enroute to the Pribolof islands stopped off at Bogoslof Island to investigate a report that the Island was showing new activity.'

'The Observations showed:

> *' (1) That in place of two islands, Castle Rock and Gwewinck, or Fire Island, as last reported there now existed only one island, Castle Rock and Gwewinck were now connected by a long sandpit. Previously a deep channel was reported between these islands'.*
>
> *'(2) That great activity had taken place and was taking place on Bogoslof Island. A new mound had risen about 175 feet above the plane of the island in the approximate former positions of Metcalf Cove and McCullock Peal. A great amount of steam was coming out of this new mound or cone'.*
>
> - Commander Hottel, 1927, USCG Cutter Northland Cruise Report.

Figure 28. Bogoslof Island Photographed by *Northland, 27 September 1927.*
Source: *Northland* Photograph Collection, Alaska State Historical Collections, Juneau.

Earlier that summer, the civilian vessel *Northern Light* made two attempts to land on Bogoslof. The ship had been commissioned by John and Courtney Borden to explore Alaska's remote maritime geographies. Their five-month excursion is meticulously documented in Courtney Borden's account 'The Cruise of the Northern Light' (Borden, 1933). Unlike the Revenue Cutter/Coast Guard officers, the Bordens were unabashed adventurers and Bogoslof was on their itinerary. On July 1, 1927, the Bordens attempted to land, but could not. 'Unfortunately, a strong wind blew in from the east, and the breakers dashing on the shore prevented us from landing on the spit. A sulphurous cloud drifted around us. Thousands upon thousands of birds flew off the rock on hearing our engines, and many thousands still remained in the dark niches. The sky around us was black with their numbers'. Theirs was the first ship to approach the volcano that summer and, accordingly, the first party of the new eruption. They 'judged from pictures…that it resembled in shape the McCollock Peak which rose and disappeared in 1907' (Borden, 1933, p. 101).

They tried again on August 24 and made the shore when their launch was surrounded by hundreds of sea lions. 'As long as we chased them, they kept ahead, but when we turned, they followed. Two persevering bulls swam under us, a strange

sensation' (Borden, 1933, p. 101). On reaching the shore, they found millions of Pallas Murres roosting in the ledges of the new Bogoslof. 'My husband and most of the crew decided to swim in the hot crater. They had a beautiful time splashing about the greenish and copper colored water, finding below the surface, a slimy green ooze' (Borden, 1933, p. 294).

The *Northland* returned in 1929 but found no substantial changes. Its observations were reported to the Hydrologic Survey and incorporated into the U.S. Coast Pilot – Alaska – Part II – 1931 Notes and Chart 8802. 'Bogoslof Island lies in Bering Sea about 22 miles northward of Umnak Island. It is of recent volcanic formation and eruptions have completely changed the topographic features several times. In 1923, as reported by the Coast Guard, Bogoslof consisted of two islands. In 1927 the Coast Guard cutter *Northland* reported that extensive changes had occurred and were then in progress. In place of two islands, Castle Rock and Fire Island, there was then but one island, the two being connected by a long sand spit where previously a deep-water channel was reported. A new mound had risen about 175 feet above the plane of the island in the approximate former position of Metcalf Cove and McCullock Peak, and a great amount of steam was escaping from this new mound or cone. Since 1927 there have been no reports of any activities at this submarine volcano' (USCP, 1931, p. 110).

Still, the position of the island in the Bering Sea continued to be in question. The commanding officer of *Northland* in 1927 stated that his observations placed the island about 4 miles southward and 1 mile eastward of the charted position. It is charted in lat. 63º 59" N., long. 168º 00'' (USCP, 1931, p. 110). The Coast Guard's interest in the island continued, though future reports became more scientific and detached in tone.

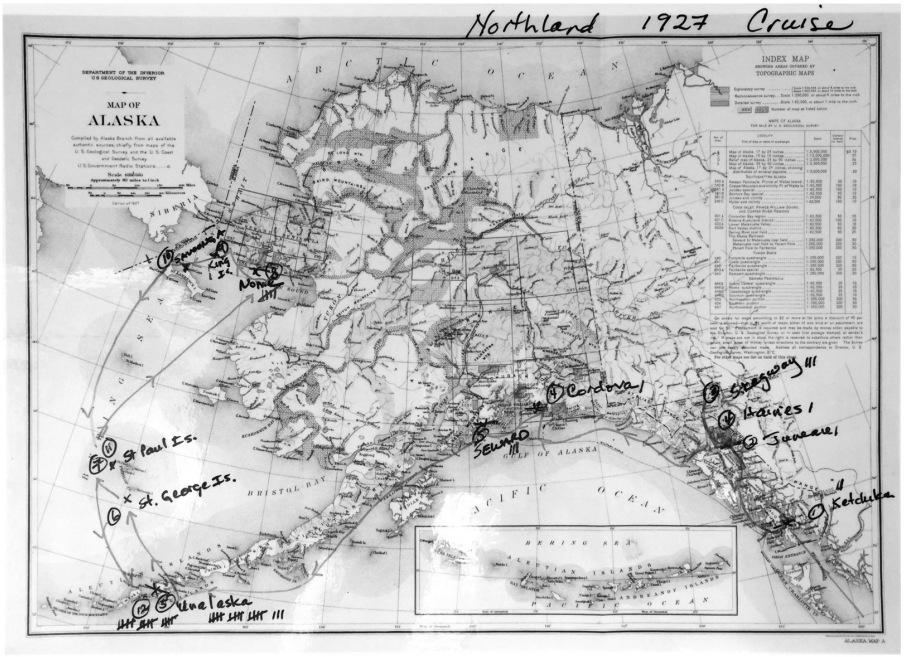


Figure 29. *Northland* 1927 Cruise Route.
Source (map): U.S. Geological Survey, c. 1927; Source (route): Ship's Log Book entries, 1927.

After leaving the island, *Northland* made a brief stop at St. George Island. At 9:30 a.m., 'Brought ship to anchor in 17 fathoms to 60 fathoms port chain, .8 mile off the village on St. George Island. Sent freight and mail ashore and the Kasherovs left the vessel.' Upon leaving the island at 10:25, the crew set fore and mail staysails and storm sail. These sails would have been used to stabilize the ship in rough seas. At 2:43 p.m., sails lowered, *Northland* anchored in 7.5 fathoms port chain at Village Cove Anchorage on St. Paul Island. The Krukoffs left the vessel and the doctor and dentist went on shore to 'render medical and dental assistance' (Ship's Log, 28 September 1927). They were both commissioned officers of the Public Health Service.

Medical officers of the Service had been assigned to serve on vessels of the Coast Guard beginning in 1879. Following the addition of dentists to the Reserve Corps in 1924, dental officers were also assigned to the Coast Guard at the Coast Guard cutters, particularly the Bering Sea Patrol (Williams, 1950, p. 522). During this first cruise, the medical and dental officers provided care for Alaska Natives on St. Paul

Island, Port Clarence, Gambell village on St. Lawrence Island, and Unalaska. The Smithsonian Institute and the people of St. Lawrence Island produced a book of photographs paired with memories based on a series of photographs taken by Dr. Leuman Waugh while on assignment on in 1929 and 1930.

Medical and Dental Service

Figure 30. Leuman M Waugh and Jimmie Ataayaghhaq 'Doctor Jimmie' on board the *Northland*. P3-142/N 42, Circa 1929-1930. Source: Smithsonian Museum of the Indian, Washington, D.C.

Figure 31. Gambell, St Lawrence Is., Northern Bering Sea. Vaccination time. P3-157/N, Circa 1929-1930. Source: Smithsonian Museum of the Indian, Washington, D.C.

Grace Kulukhon Slwooko of Akulmii remembered *Northland's* visits:

> *'We soon began to expect the arrivals of those ships and would be looking to the ocean for them when there was no more ice. The first beautiful white ship that arrived I know was Northland. It was a big floating clinic. There were doctors on board set to do something. So some of the villagers that were sick or had pains were brought to them. And they sure helped us with their treatments'.*
>
> - Grace Kulukhon Slwooko of Akulmii, 2013, in Reardon p. 44.

Vera Oovi Kaneshiro of Uqitlek also recalled the ship that 'brought vaccines, and sometimes also conducted routine physical examinations of the people. When there was a need of dental care, a person would be taken to the ship to have teeth worked on' (Krupnik & Oovoi, 2011, p. 114). Although their core constituency was indigenous people, the medical officers responded to emergencies for the scattered non-native population of teachers, missionaries, government employees and commercial seafarers. Sometimes by radio and other times in person. While at Port

Clarence on October 3, *Northland* 'received the following radio from Dutch Harbor: 1704 Following from Charles Grimm quote Judge Finch and Mrs. Hope both desperately ill for some days and urgently in need of medical attention stop our efforts bring no improvements stop no doctor. Unalaska unquote 1315 Sent following message in reply: 1004 NORTHLAND will start for Unalaska as soon as urgent duty here will permit stop what is nature of Finch's illness stop keep us advised 1200' (Ship's Log, 3 October 1927).

The Medical Officer rendered medical treatment to Judge Finch and Mrs. Hope. Captain Hottell cancelled the remaining planned cruise stops to return to Unalaska where the 'Medical Officer rendered treatment to Postmaster Finch and Mrs. Hope' (Ship's Log, 18 October 1927). Even so, it took over two weeks to return to the base. The officers also provided care for the Coast Guard crew, whether accidents or illness, as when Kenneth Farrar, Sea2c. Injured in a fall down the port companionway ladder at 5:05 p.m. in rough weather while at Nome' (Ship's Log, 3 October 1927). While at sea, to the aforementioned routines were added the tasks of airing sails, signal flags, bunting and bedding. The number of watches per 24-hour period was increased to seven and night rations were issued to the 12 officers and sailors on the night watch.

On September 29th, *Northland* approached Nome 'sounding the fog signal while thick' (Ship's Log, 29 September 1927). Upon arrival, they anchored at the Nome Roadstead and delivered the Bishop, mail and freight to the Nome Station via the Coast Guard Schooner *Hazel*. Three men were transferred to the Nome Station, and all hands received pay from the Special Dispensing Agent. The next day, the ship received 5 sacks of mail for Wainwright and 3 sacks for Barrow. Liberty was granted and again transgressed. Quarters and drills were omitted on account of inclement weather. On October 3rd at 11:05 a.m., 'Up anchor, underway full speed ahead. 11:15 set fore and staysails and main storm sail' (Ship's Log, 3 October 1927). The wind velocity noted as Beaufort Scale[33] 5-6 (a fresh-strong breeze, 19-31 statute miles per hour), the stay and storm sails were raised to calm ship motion in moderate seas.

Passengers

[33] The Beaufort scale is correlated to wind velocity, beginning with 1 = calm, rising in intensity to breeze, gale, storm and finally to 12 = hurricane.

On October 5, after landing mail and providing dental and medical care at Teller Mission/St. Clarence, *Northland* headed back toward Nome to pick up 150 King Island Natives and their belongings. Every year, the Bering Sea Patrol ship transported the entire population of King Island to Nome for the summer and returned them in the fall. Mr. T.S. Scupholm, US Bureau of Education Representative, and his wife also came aboard for transportation to St. Lawrence Island.[34] Back at sea the next day, *Northland* anchored outside King Island Village and assisted the Native passengers in transporting their belongings to shore. They left on the evening of the 6th and encountered the infamous Bering Sea weather. The Ship's Log records a Beaufort Scale of 8-9 (moderate to fresh gale with wind speeds of 32-46 mph). The Events of the day contains the following entry:

> *'4 a.m. to 8:00 a.m [watch]: Proceeding on course 219 p.g.c. at standard speed. 4:10 Changed course to 260 p.g.c. Vessel rolling heavily. 6:15 Vessel took several deep rolls to port, maximum roll 54.5, headed vessel immediately into sea, reduced speed and hove to on course 12 p.g.c. Vessel rolled lee rail well under causing considerable water to enter cabin, wardroom, passageway and staterooms'.*
>
> - Ship's Log, 7 October 1927.

Rock and Roll

The matter-of-fact tone of the entry belies the tension and the activities that must have consumed the officers and crew. This was the 'Rock and Roll' version of *Northland* alluded to by Max Miller. The captain set 7 watches, and for the next six days the vessel circled St. Lawrence Island and hove to, unable to anchor and waiting out the gale. Unsurprisingly, most days all but the magazine inspection routine were, 'Omitted on account of inclement weather and vessel motion' (Ship's Log, 7 October 1927). On October 13th, at 7:28 a.m., *Northland* finally anchored near Savoonga village on St. Lawrence Island. Freight was loaded and unloaded, the mail was sent ashore in custody of the Scupholms and the doctor and dentist went ashore to treat the locals. By 1:20 p.m., the anchor was up and the vessel proceeded to Gambell where once again the doctor and dentist went ashore to treat the locals. At 9:50 p.m. it was back underway. Six days had been spent to achieve less than fifteen hours of service on the island. Night rations were issued and *Northland* was

[34] Mrs. Scupholm became seriously ill in 1929, and the Northland 'dared the ice to save her.'

back at sea for the next three days on route back to Unalaska, with a short stop at St. Paul to pick up 20 Natives, their belongings and H.C. Holmes, C.R.M. U.S. Navy and his wife for transportation to Unalaska.

The final 17 days of the cruise were spent at the Bering Sea Patrol headquarters in Unalaska. The Ship's Logs don't explain the duration of the time in port, though it exceeded the average 7-10 day mid-cruise stays that typified Bering Sea Patrol ship movements. It is likely that the incident on the 7th required repairs, and the entire Deck Force was put to work 'holystoning decks, overhauling boat falls, and variously employed' (Ship's Log, 18 October 1927). Quarters and drills were mostly omitted due to inclement weather. Medical and dental assistance was provided ashore on multiple days. Liberty was granted every night. On the 19th, the American Steamship *Lawrence* sounded a distress whistle signal from out in the fog.

A motor surfboat found the *Lawrence* of New York, with Captain R.F Albrecht on board, hove to off Princess Hand. Continued gales damaged her superstructure and all boats, caused food to go off and fuels supply to run very low. Had tried to reach Dutch Harbor but had no charts or knowledge of these ports. *Northland's* Navigating officer went aboard and piloted her to anchorage in Unalaska Bay and provided the Master with necessary charts of Aleutian Islands. The ship was boarded and inspected, and no violations were reported (Ship's Log, 19 October 1927). On the 22nd, Quarters, drills and inspections were resumed, and an officer was dispatched to rescue one of the *Lawrence's* second mates from a capsized boat, and then tow the small boat from the *Lawrence* that had tried but failed to assist the drowning man. On the 24th, the Deck Force put an engine in a gas boat for a Native and held a blinker drill for the Quartermasters. On the 25th, the United State Commissioner Finch (also the postmaster) requested several of *Northland's* officers join a board of inquiry as to the *Lawrence.* Deck Courts were held, 97,995 pounds of coal received from the Northern Commercial Company, and the U.S.B.F (United States Bureau of Fisheries) Eider stood in and moored to the Unalaska dock. Inclement weather returned and on October 30th so at 6:00 a.m., 'Wound ship and secured on outboard side of dock' (Ship's Log, 30 October 1927).[35] 'Deck force splicing wire pendent, cleaning paintwork and variously employed' (Ship's Log, 31 October 1927). Then on

[35] 'Wound' in this context means to pivot the ship at the dock.

the 1st of November, when the sea ice was returning from the north, *Northland* received an urgent plea from Nome:

> *'Received the following message from Nome Station quote 9901 Important NORTHLAND return Nome account condition motorship SIERRA Vessel short of water for running deck auxiliaries stearing gear frozen up twenty one crew do not believe vessel can proceed without assistance has four hundred tons general merchandise food stuffs for Nome If some is not landed Nome community will suffer account of shortage Lightage [freight] company has done everything possible to land remaining cargo but retarded by low water and young ice between ship and beach stop.'*
>
> - Ship's Log, 1 November 1927.
>
> -

The *Northland* headed north on November 2, after filling the water tanks, cofferdams and waiting for the northerly gale to subside. '8:15 unmoored ship. Proceeding to assistance M.S. SIERRA. Noon: Received message from Nome that S.S. SIERRA had repaired her steering gear and that other conditions were unchanged. Issued 12 night rations' (Ship's Log, 2 November 1927). The next day, 'Received message from Nome that S.S. SIERRA had departed from Nome. Changed course to 170 p.g.c. 7:10 p.m. received a radio message from the M.S. Sierra that she had encountered slush ice five miles south of Nome and that she would let us know when clear of the ice. Slowed to standard speed. Received a radio message from the M.S. Sierra that she was free from all ice and was preceding to Akutan. Issued 12 night rations' and headed back to Unalaska' (Ship's Log, 3 November 1927). Arranged for five of the *Lawrence* crew to stay aboard the ship and the rest to come on board the *Northland* for transportation as destitute sailors. On November 6th, *Northland* was detached from the Bering Sea Patrol and departed for Oakland, California to wait out the ice and return in the spring. And 'so to end' its debut in the Bering Sea Patrol. Although it logged far fewer miles that it would on future seasonal patrols, *Northland's* first cruise foray to Bogoslof, the ship-shaped habitus on board and the routes and tasks it accomplished illustrate several important ways in which the vessel's participation in the assemblage of the Bering Sea Patrol was key to the extension of federal authority over the patrol area and mediated by the conditions it faced.

ALASKA PAUSE I SUMMARY: BOGOSLOF ISLAND

None of the Revenue Cutter/Coast Guard Cutter excursions to Bogoslof Island, including *Northland's* 1927 visit, can be easily slotted into one of the Coast Guard's primary duties outlined in the beginning of this chapter. Tangentially, a case could be made that the island was a refuge for sea lions, and thus fell under its fish and game responsibilities. And perhaps it was necessary to chart the island for the benefit of mariners. However, several of the reports barely contain the writer's excitement at being explorer, detective and witness to the earth's vitality in this very remote position in the Bering Sea. Cantwell and later Zeusler's enthusiasm is best captured by Jagger's exclamation that:

> *'Surely here, if anywhere in the world, we were at the beginning of things, and could take a peep at a continent in embryo, and see land grow fast enough to show results within the limits of human time'.*
>
> - Jagger, 1908, p. 396.

The cutters were used as much for exploration and scientific instruments as for governance.

Bogoslof Evolution

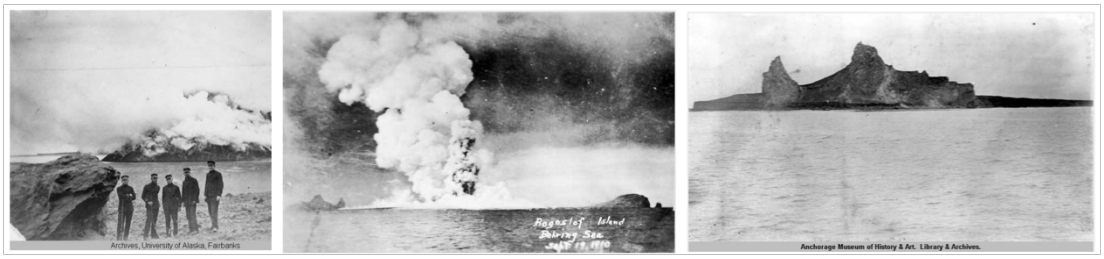


Figure 31a. Revenue Service Crew on Bogoslof, c. 1908. Source: Alaska and Polar Regions Collections, University of Alaska, Fairbanks.

Figure 31b. Erruption on Bogoslof Island, c. 1910. Source: United State Coast Guard Historian's Office, Washington, D.C.

Figure 31c. Bogoslof Island(s), c. 1930. Source: Anchorage Museum Collection, Anchorage.

The *Northland's* 1927 visit elicited no equivalent curiosity or enthusiasm in the ship's log and annual report, which suggests that even if there was interest in exploring more of the changes, there wasn't time to do so. However, the results of that brief inquiry did make its way into the USCP Alaska for 1931, thereby advancing cartographic knowledge about the tiny island. It wasn't until 1934 when a scientific survey was completed by another Bering Sea Patrol cutter (*Chelan)* that the position

of the island was settled to the satisfaction of the Hydrologic Survey and doubt removed from subsequent editions of the Coast Pilot.

Legitimation and authority underpinned the persistent efforts of the Bering Sea Patrol Force to fix the location and contours of Bogoslof. *Northland's* contribution, a function primarily of sea-going mobility, was to produce a set of data via photographic images that captured Bogoslof at a moment in time. It was a snapshot of a restless subterranean volcanic entity, evidence of the earth's own agency. Bogoslof persisted in splitting apart and reconnecting. Sea lions established breeding grounds then fled. Murres and seagulls established rookeries, hatched thousands of chicks and were roasted by eruptions. Peaks, named for cutters that discovered them, rose up then deformed and collapsed. Steam and fog foiled attempts at scientific measurements. Bogoslof, a tiny fraction of Territorial Alaska, resisted state power.

SUMMARY INAUGURAL CRUISE

Accounts of the inaugural cruise are useful for several purposes. They expose the repeated motions that produced an embodied experience, a maritime habitus on the ship (routines, drills, inspections, ship maintenance tasks, Deck Courts, liberty leave, watches). It also provides evidence for *Northland's* response to its first encounter with extreme Bering Sea weather and sea conditions. The depth of the roll and incursion of seawater into the ship was a serious breach of expectations regarding its sea-keeping qualities. Its inability to reach St. Lawrence Island for six days due to 'inclement weather'. This also highlights the limitations of the ship's logs. There is an entry for every day the ship was in service while serving in the coast guard, but the data recorded in them is limited to what was required by regulation. To understand an event thoroughly, it is necessary to read between the lines and gather information elsewhere. The lack of certain information in the logs is also data. For example, a discriminatory attitude towards Alaska Natives is evidenced by the absence of their names as passengers in the 'Events of the Day'. Instead, they are assembled as an anonymous, lower case, group (20 'natives') or a group associated with a location (150 King Islanders). The names of white persons are always listed.

Finally, the inaugural cruise included many of the typical tasks and activities assigned to ships of the Bering Sea Patrol. It provided medical and dental services, assisted vessels in distress, transported civilian government employees and Alaska Natives, including assisting the seasonal migration of King Islanders to Nome and back. Unusually, it spent 28 days out of the 59-day cruise season in Unalaska. In a normal cruise year, it might have spent several weeks in port over the course of a six-month cruise. The following analytical pauses provide information about relevant activities that were not a part of *Northland's* abbreviated first seasonal cruise.

ALASKA PAUSE II – ELLIE AND PILLOWAK'S MEDIATED WEDDING

Figure 32. Alaska Pause Map 2.
Source: Author. Created 2018.

Ataaka, a village chief from the village of Savoonga on St. Lawrence Island (Coast Pilot Chart 1931, #9302), sent a radio message to *Northland* asking Commander Zeusler if he would perform a wedding ceremony for his daughter Elsie. His village is situated at the 'extreme end of North Cape [St. Lawrence Island]. There are about 50 inhabitants and a dozen houses including a United States Bureau of Education schoolhouse. The Bureau of Education operates a radio station, call letters WWP. It is also the headquarters of the Reindeer Commercial Co. that runs about 7,000 deer on the island. A bar extends 3/4 mile to the northward from North Cape, and vessels should anchor to the eastward of this bar' (USCP, 1931, p. 344). Archaeologist Froelich Rainey, a member of the Smithsonian team who was directing a dig on the island, recounts in his memoir *Reflections of a Digger*, 'the ensuing memorable wedding on the decks of *Northland* that took place in the early days of September of 1937' (Rainey, 1991, pp. 55-6).

Ellie was the chief's daughter. The groom to be was William Pillowak, a Siberian Yupik from Ungazik who was working as a laborer on Rainey's dig crew. He was a

refugee from the famines that had decimated the population of Cape Chaplino (Мыс Чаплина). To comply with local tradition, Pillowak had completed the customary seven years of work for Ellie's father, one of the chief boat owners of Savoonga. The couple were ready to wed. The Commander agreed to conduct the marriage rites on the deck of *Northland*; both the ship and crew were enrolled in the performance observed by Rainey. 'The chief engineer made the wedding ring, the cook prepared a wedding breakfast, and the captain turned out the whole crew to greet the wedding party in dress formation' (Rainey, 1991, p. 55-6). Up aboard the cutter, over 100 persons must have participated in Ellie and Pillowak's top-deck wedding.

Northland Deck Weddings

Figure 33. Holding marriage certificates on deck of *Northland*, c. 1932.
Source: Alaska and Polar Regions Collections, University of Alaska, Fairbanks.

Figure 32b. Commander Hottel, USCG *Northland*, conducts native marriage on deck, c. 1928.
Source: United States Coast Guard Historian's Office, Bethesda.

Figure 32c. Commander Zeusler conducts wedding on *Northland*, c. 1937.
Source: Alaska and Polar Regions Collections, University of Alaska, Fairbanks.

> *'1:40 Commanding Office and Medical Officer returned from inspection of village.*
> *3:00 the following (native) couple were married by the Commanding Officer: Lloyd Kowak and Marguerite Ninguelook'.*
>
> - Ship's Log, 4 August 1928.

The *Northland,* as well as other cutters, had been the scene of multiple wedding ceremonies over the years where those commanding officers that had been sworn in as US Commissioners were authorized to perform the legalities (Naske, 1985, p. 6). This version of the ceremony was read from a hybrid script created by Zeusler (Zeusler, 1937, p. 1). The structure and content of the marriage certificate and the deliberations that produced it indicate it was a sincere but awkward attempt to mediate between the indigenous traditions of village elders, a new generation of

Native Alaskan youth that recently recognized alternative possibilities to elder mandates, and the requirements of 'white man's law' as performed by the commanding officer.

This moment provides an entry point into an examination of the extension of the U.S. legal regime into the affairs of indigenous people that exposes how the ship and its officers were participants in external interventions into native relationship practices. Not only as a site which was transformed into a kind of floating weeding chapel, but also a vessel for the importation of federal legal structures (including those that applied to marriage and the manner and vehicles for their importation), and the role of the officers and the ship in mediating between federal mandates and the realities of the Territorial Alaskan context.

ALASKA NATIVES OF ST. LAWRENCE ISLAND

The population of Savoonga village was counted as 209 persons in the 1939 census. With the exception of the schoolteacher, all were Siberian Y'upik Native Alaskans (referred to at that time as Bering Sea Eskimos). According to linguist Steve Langdon, Y'upik 'refers to the speakers of languages in the You'ik group of the EskaAleut language family' and includes both St. Lawrence islanders and Siberians across the Sea in the Chukchi Peninsula (Langdon, 2002, p. 48). They inhabited both the village of Gambell and Savoonga and parts of the Siberian Chukchi Peninsula, where about 900 Siberian Y'upik live. Steve Langdon claims that the isolation of the island and the lack of ready resources to harvest meant that these communities were shielded from major cultural impacts of colonization until the second half of the 20th century. The story of Pillowak and Ellie suggests otherwise.

Traditional Practices

The social unit of Y'upik people 'consists of a named group of closely related and intermarrying extended families comprising several communities with a common territory. These communities all relied for subsistence on large marine mammal hunting by crews of related seafarers who hunted both whale and walrus using open

skin boats called ‘angyeq’’ (Langdon, 2002, p. 48). Y’upik marriages were traditionally arranged by tribal elders.

In their study ‘Faith, Food, and Family in a Yupik Whaling Community’, authors Carol Zane Jolles and Elinor Mikaghaq Oozeva devote a chapter to the traditions of marriage, laying out a case that 'Marriages were and still are to some extent agreements between larger social groups’ (Jolles & Mikaghaq, 2011, p. 134). Many of the values and beliefs that have shaped and sustained the community for the last hundred years find expression in the marriage. Respect for elders, marriage choices, family membership, clan (ramka) membership, and obligation to family members take root in marriage (Jolles & Mikaghaq, 2011, p. 130). Underlying the system of marriage is the long-standing rule that the young should heed the advice and dictates of elders without question (Jolles & Mikaghaq, 2011, p. 130). ‘People didn't just choose their own spouses in my observation when I became aware of life. The parents obtained spouses for them. Although they didn't want to marry then, they'd urge them to’ (Nick in Reardon, 2013, p. 92).

Marriage arrangements apparently were not discussed with the young people until just before the first celebrations of their joining were about to occur. In many cases the young persons had a kind of general awareness but were ignorant of the particulars of their marriage arrangement. Young men were more likely to know who had been selected for them than women were (Jolles, 2011, p. 132). There is a 'buying the woman' celebration with gifts from the groom's clan to the bride's presented in a ceremony. Afterwards, the 'groom's service' begins. At a time designated by the elders, he actually moves into his father in law's house. In the past, after much embarrassment and tribulation, the young couple would sleep together, consummating and signifying the true beginning of the marriage 'Marriages were and still are to some extent agreements between larger social groups’ (Jolles, 2011, p. 135). These rules regarding appropriate marriage prospects persisted until such time as ‘white man’s law’ became known and native youth's objections to these traditional arrangements found a means, in the white ship and its captain, of circumventing tradition.

The Import of White Man's Law

In 1892 William Thomas Lopp and Ellen Louise Kitteridge were heralded in the magazine *The Eskimo* as having ben united in 'The first marriage celebrated by law on the northwest coast of Alaska' (The Eskimo, 1939). In fact, it is not clear under what legal regime that would have been the case. As mentioned in the introduction, Alaska was not yet in legal terms a territory but a military and customs district. From purchase, the U.S. Army, Treasury Department and Navy managed the possession in succession (Naske & Slotnick, 2014, p. 99). Alaska was virtually left to its own devices in legal matters in the late 1800s and early 1900s. The lack of civilian governance structures was not necessarily a negative condition for Alaska Natives. For a period of time they were mostly free to follow their traditional subsistence lifestyle and cultural customs, including practices related to family and marriage.

Other institutions started to fill in the gap. Jackson's recruits established their own version of civil society governance through religious conversion and the various administrative roles they were to play in the remote communities of maritime Alaska. The Catholic Church, particularly the Jesuit order, similarly established missions in Alaska. 'Before the missionaries came to the North Slope', says William Bodfish, 'There were no formal ceremonies marking the marriage of a couple. The union of a man and a woman was consummated by an act of sexual intercourse, which established a special social relationship recognized by other community members and by their offspring' (Bodfish, 1991, p. 269). As the USCG, the missions, and state schools penetrated further north, the private affairs of indigenous people became the target of intervention.

William Hensley, a prominent Alaska Native leader writes, 'And as the Outsiders moved in and took control of our lands and resources, they'd brought another crushing burden: the heavy hand of government over our lives. With outsider control came Outsider demands. My family and I were supposed to learn a new language, adopt profoundly different notions of private property; we were supposed to adjust our communal society to one based on capitalism, self-interest and individual choice. Even before statehood, the effort to change Native Alaskans into

proper 'Americans' was starting up. A joint project of the Christian missionaries and the U.S. government' (Hensley, 2010, pp. 6-7).[36]

A USCG film, produced on *Northland* in the 1930s, underscores Hensley's point. As the opening credits role, the mission of the Bering Sea Patrol is revealed:

> *'Annually, during the first week of May, the Coast Guard Cutter "Northland" leaves Oakland for the Bering Sea and Arctic Regions, spending the summer and fall months dispending such advantages of civilization to Uncle Sam's Alaskan wards as their primitive and simple lives can assimilate'.*
>
> - USCG, c. 1930-1934, 111-M109

Commander Zeusler used similar language in his report on the 1937 cruise, which included the census gathering and sociological study conducted by the USCG Sociologist Serratt (discussed in the following Pause section).

> *'It is honestly believed that those locations most influenced by the white man are generally the most unsatisfactory, the most unhealthy, the dirtiest and the most unmoral. Generally in those villages that have law enforcement officers and where the natives are subject to the white man's influence are below average. From my observations, generally speaking, these officials do not have the interests of the natives at heart, they do not understand the psychology of the natives and are in many ways political appointees, interested only in themselves in their jobs and their income.'*
>
> – Commander F.A. Zeusler, 17 September 1938, p.2.

His assessment echoes Captain Robley Evans' much earlier criticism of the missionaries. 'I don't mind any of them until it comes to the missionary-school teachers. They nauseate me. The condition up here, as I see them, are about as bad as they could be and the whole business is a disgrace to our government; but I am a policeman this trip for sealers only' (Evans, 1901, p. 325). Native youth, elders, local schoolteachers and missionaries all expressed their different, and often conflicting interests in how marriages were arranged and by whom, how, when and by whom marriage rites could be performed.

MEDIATING MARRIAGE

[36] William Hensley was born on Kotzebue Sound and became a key leader in the establishment of the Alaska Native Land Claims Settlement Act.

The *New York Times* published an article in 1938 headlined, 'Teacher Bars Marriages; Alaska Eskimos Rebel'. The brief story presents Zeusler as both USCG and US Commissioner, as a mediator in the 'Conflict between a prim white schoolteacher and the Eskimos of remote island settlements between Alaska and Siberia. Alaska law requires that native marriages be registered with a United States Commissioner in the islands and the village schoolteacher (an employee of the US Department of Education) had insisted that couples wishing to marry wait until the commander, who is ex officio commissioner, arrived. Commander Zeusler ruled in favor of the natives. Now they may marry officially at any time by registering with their tribal council and re-registering when the commissioner comes' (*New York Times*, 13 February 1938, p. 4).

In his 1938 Cruise Report, Zeusler refers to this conflict as a misunderstanding. 'It was rather interesting that conferences were called at Savoonga and Gambell as the result of certain misunderstandings in regard to the marriage laws. I have thoroughly discussed the matter with the councils and the school teachers of both villages, and the following was submitted to the councils for their consideration'. (Zeusler, 1938, p. 24). This was not Zeusler's first intervention in matters of native marriage practices as well as other matters in which US laws and regulations produced tension in Bering Sea communities. He reported on the status of the local schoolteacher as de facto government representative in a 1937 memo from Gambell, the other village on St. Lawrence Island. 'The government body of the village of Gambell consists of a president and a council. That body petitioned the Commanding Officer for a decision in regard to the authority of the school teacher to veto or override the acts of the council'. It seems he mediated in his role as U.S. Commissioner and '…decided that the school teacher is a representative of the Federal Government and was therefor responsible for enforcing the laws of the United States and that any act passed by the council that was not contrary to the laws of the United States and decency and morality would stand and the school teacher would have no jurisdiction over the matter. It was decided that as the school teacher was represented on the council, that his advice was desired, but it was not necessary for the council to accept that advice except where it pertained to conflicting contemplated new legislation' (Zeusler, 1937, Memo). In the memo, Zeusler specifically addressing the subject of marriage under the purviews of his commissioner status.

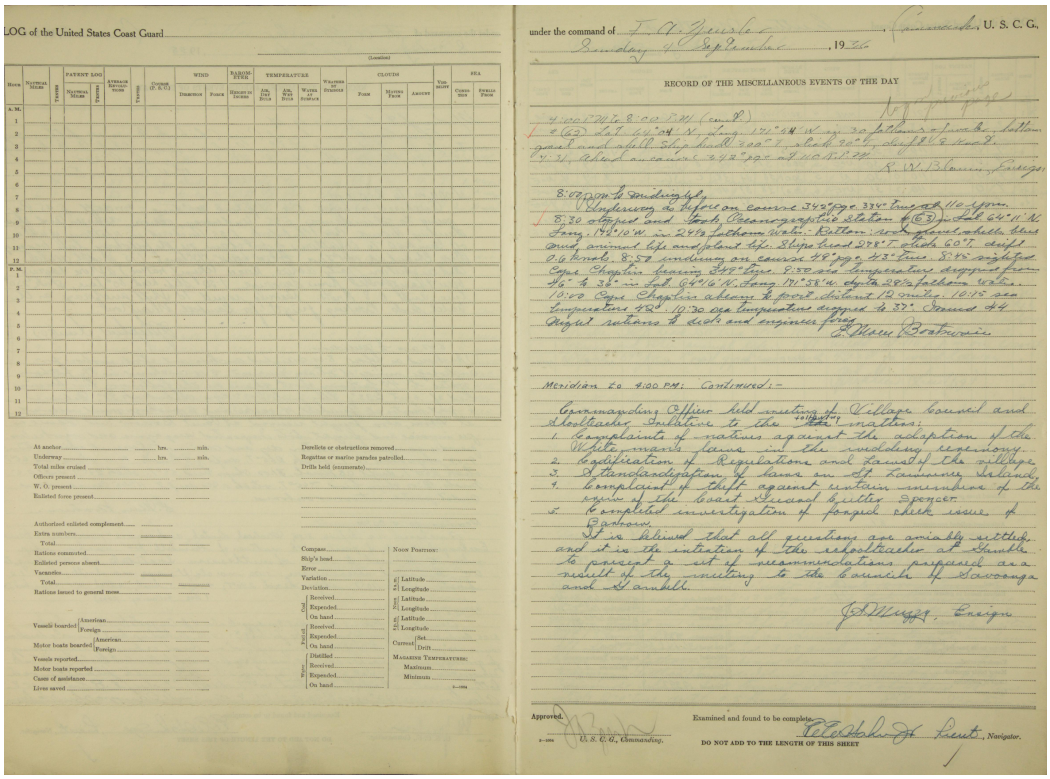
'All commissioners were empowered to perform a multitude of miscellaneous duties such as taking oaths, conducting extradition proceedings, hearing seaman's wage dispute cases, etc.' (Lindquist, p. 1). In Alaska, those duties were expanded, and likely stretched given the USCG commanders handled both naval and law enforcement matters. 'In view of the fact that St. Lawrence Island is in a separate category with respect to commissioners and marshals and that the jurisdiction of the Commanding Officer in respect to the duties of the Commissioner extends to St. Lawrence Island and that by agreement all cases except those involving murder, rape, and highway robbery are handled by the council, the decision of the council to continue the present custom of marriage was upheld by the Commanding Officer and the decision of the school teacher in this matter overruled' (Lindquist, 1).

> *'The wedding ceremony, in my opinion, is more binding that in the United States and consists generally speaking of the following: The main obtains permission from his parents, the woman from her parents. An agreement is reached between the man and the woman. A petition is filed with the council and when approved the man and woman become man and wife, and they are allowed to live together. The question of divorce was raised and the president of the council informed me once a choice is made it has to last. The natives know that and they are careful in making a choice. Most of them are happily married. Although no regular ceremony in which the words to love, honor and obey are used, is actually performed, the agreement or approval given by the council contemplates a great deal more and that is thoroughly understood'.*
>
> - Commander F.A. Zeusler, 1938, Memo.

Foregrounding his comment regarding white enforcement officers in villages, he added the comment, 'Both Savoonga and Gambell natives earnestly implore that no marshal or commissioner be assigned to St. Lawrence villages, that with the school teacher and a medical missionary, the people are more happy and more contented' (Zeusler, 1938, Memo). Zeusler, however, was not a neutral observer with respect to the engagement and marriage process described above. He had actively intervened in indigenous practices by creating it. He also conferred with tribal elders to create a 'regular ceremony.' The certificate and script for the ceremony suggest an earnest attempt to mediate between 'white man's law' and indigenous practices. And to mediate between Native youth, whose exposure to non-Native practices was the source of another set of pressures on the authority of elders in the case of marriage.

In early September 1936, *Northland* stopped in St. Lawrence, and Commander/U.S. Commissioner Zeusler met with the Village Council. The Ship's Log 'Miscellaneous Events of the Day' records the agenda as including 'Complaints of Natives against

the adoption of the White Mans laws in the wedding ceremony.' In fact, Zeusler felt compelled to act in the matter in response to native concerns, but not only those of the elders on village councils.



LOG of the United States Coast Guard

under the command of T. A. Zeusler, Commander, U. S. C. G.

RECORD OF THE MISCELLANEOUS EVENTS OF THE DAY

Approved.

U. S. C. G., Commanding.

Examined and found to be complete.

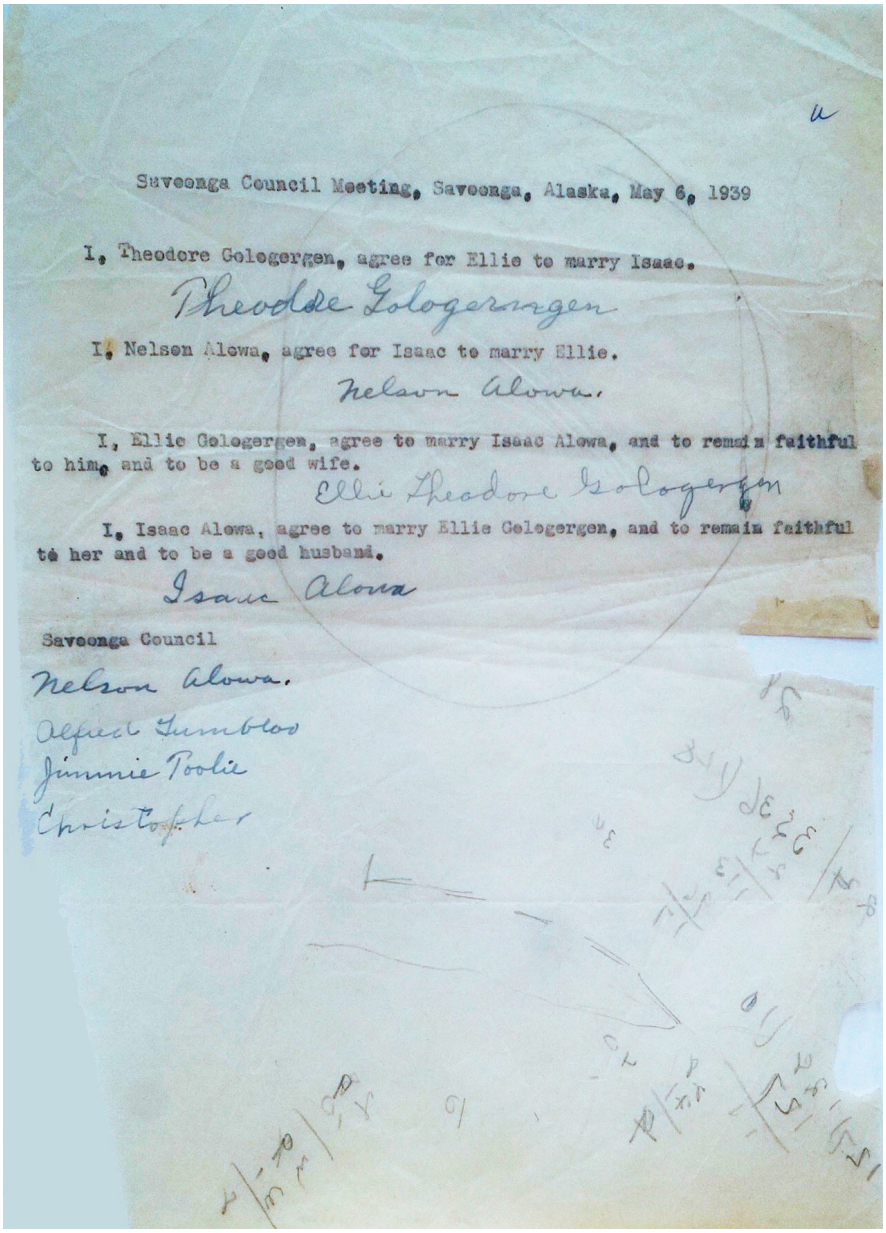
Navigator.

DO NOT ADD TO THE LENGTH OF THIS SHEET

Figure 34. Ship's Log 4 September 1936.
Source: [US] National Archives, Washington, D.C.

Young Natives identified that a white man's law might assist them in objecting to their elder's choices, and they approached *Northland's* commander for clarification. 'Two (?) years ago two Gambell girls went to the commander of the NORTHLAND, saying they did not want to marry those chosen for them. As I understand, the commander said they did not have to. Since then the older people have put more pressure on the boys, thinking that the decision would not apply to the boys. The conference and discussion of Sunday have spread through both villages. Each older native is interpreting my explanation to his own liking. i.e., if the younger people can marry one of their choice after they reach a certain age, we, the older people, can put pressure on them to marry our choice before they reach that age. This is a very serious matter for both sides. The village councils, as older men, will be against the changes as a whole. This is an extremely serious matter; having been put off from year to year, something must be done -- things must be settled this year' (Zeusler, 1938, Confidential Notes).

Zeusler decided to attempt to reconcile US law and local practice. After consulting with elders in several villages, he wrote up a hybrid marriage agreement. The results were quickly in use on St. Lawrence Island. 'Form of Solemnization of Matrimony between Fred Okoomeakingok and Martha. Approved by the Savoonga Council. December 22, 1938. We have gathered together here in the sight of God and in the face of this company, to confirm the solemnization of matrimony of this man and this woman whom you have duly wedded according to tribal rites' (Zeusler, 1938, Confidential Notes).



Savoonga Council Meeting, Savoonga, Alaska, May 6, 1939

I, Theodore Gologergen, agree for Ellie to marry Isaac.

Theodore Gologergen

I, Nelson Alowa, agree for Isaac to marry Ellie.

Nelson Alowa.

I, Ellie Gologergen, agree to marry Isaac Alowa, and to remain faithful to him, and to be a good wife.

Ellie Theodore Gologergen

I, Isaac Alowa, agree to marry Ellie Gologergen, and to remain faithful to her and to be a good husband.

Isaac Alowa

Savoonga Council

Nelson Alowa.

Alfred Tumbloo

Jimmie Toolie

Christopher

Figure 35. Savoonga Marriage Agreement. 4 May 1939.
Source: Zeusler Papers, Alaska State Historical Collections, Juneau.

Froelich Rainey, whose memoire first mentioned Ellie and Pilowak's marriage onboard *Northland*, mentions Ellie sent him a photograph of herself, '…buxom and radiating vitality, taken with her four tall, husky sons' (Rainey, 1991, p. 55). It would appear her wedding on *Northland*'s deck lasted. It wasn't always the case. 'I heard that once they took a few Eskimo couples from Savoonga and married them on a ship. Those people were Jimmie and Mabel Toolie, Tagneghlii and Piluguk, also Ratwhenga and Fred Aqumigalnnug. They were all married together on one day. And I heard that Piluguk and Tagneghlii decided to split right away, because they did not agree on something. So, they got divorced before they hit the land on their way back from the ship. But then they remarried again later' (Uwhaawen in Krupnik & Oovoi, 2011, p. 168).

Northland's Coast Guard Commanders with U.S. Commissioner status inspected, interviewed and intervened in a range of other matters, as evidenced in the ship's logbooks. On 26 July 1928 in Barrow, 'The commanding officer [Hottell] inspected the village and, in his capacity as United States Commissioner, interviewed the local United States Commissioner, Mr. Brower, Doctor Newhall, the missionary, and the Bureau of Education school-teacher, Mr. Vincent. Conditions were found to be satisfactory' (USCG, 1929, p. 38). 'The commanding officer held conferences on legal matters with the mayors and councils of the following villages: Gambell, Savoonga, Wales, St. Michael, King Island, Elin, Point Hope and Unakaleet' (Zeusler, 1937, p. 16). Those matters included subsistence; Commanding Officer conferred with representatives of local Eskimos in regard to hunting and fishing (Ship's Log, 10 June 1938). 'At request of US Marshal in Nome, native Frank Ohkaya was arrested at Little Diomede Island and brought on board for transportation to Nome where he was to be tried under charges of forgery' (USCG, 1929, p. 41).

ALASKA PAUSE II SUMMARY

Ataaka recognized *Northland* and its captain as having the capability of seeing to the marriage of his daughter. The request that he made for the Commander to conduct the marriage ceremony is in itself powerful evidence for the authority and approachability that ship and officer accrued and projected on land. Like the aeroplane, 'it had become easily recognizable and its capacities were known' (Adey, 2017, p. 58). The ship's locale was converted into a wedding chapel of sorts, a transformation enacted not through physical adaptation, but social practice. The crew transformed by donning their formal uniforms and standing configured as to form a passageway for the couple. This, like physical adaptation, is a kind of mutability.

The legal authority of the commander to conduct the wedding was tied to his institutional status as a US Commissioner, the essence of personified extended power. Zeulser's effort to reconcile the laws and practices of marriage encompasses both power over and power to, layering one on top of the other. Authority, legal and accrued, gave him the power to propose a mediated solution. But the power relations fostered with Alaska Natives by *Northland* and Zeusler himself surfaced the other kind of power within the Bering Sea Patrol, power which transferred at least some of the capacity to (re)define the traditions and legalities of Native marriages. Here, the ship was intimately enrolled in the workings of the assemblage by surfacing bi-directional legitimacy and manifesting celebratory place.

[1] Rainey spells the father's name 'Ataka', but the 1939 census spells it 'Ataaka' and the woman Rainey refers to as 'Ellie' is listed as 'Elsie' in the same census.

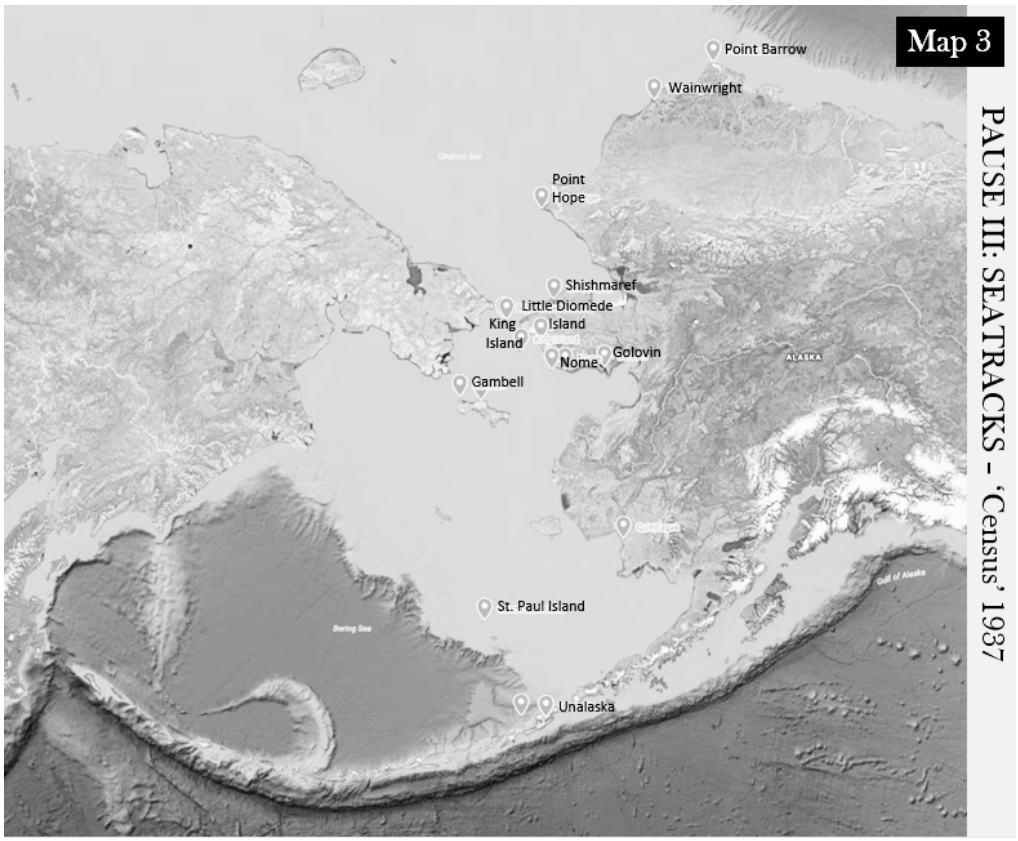


Figure 36: Alaska Pause Map 3.
Source: Author. Created 2018.

In the cruise years 1937 and 1938, under the command of F.A Zeusler, *Northland* sent ashore not only the doctor and dentist, as was usual, but a 'census party' that visited 25 and 23 villages respectively. As with other cursory entries in the ship's logbooks that mask the import of a happening, the 'census' was really something more and something else.

> *'8:00 p.m. to midnight. Anchored as before. Medical, dental and census parties departed for duty at Teller Mission. Ship's head 265º T., Drift 0.2 knots. 11:15 Medical, dental and census parties returned aboard boat #5. Hoisted to sail and secured. 12:00 No current'*
>
> -Ship's Log, 3 July 1937.

> *'Ship's Log 4 August 1938. Wainwright: 4:00 a.m. to 8 a.m. Anchored as before. 5:00 Ship's head 210º true. Stick 60º true. Drift 0.4 knots. 6:00 Ship's head 210º true, drift 0.4 knots. Medical, dental and census parties departed for work in Wainwright'*
>
> - Ship's Log, 4 August 1938.

A formal government census is a systematic accounting of persons, demographics, and economic resources of the nation (Kassinger, 1999). There's no evidence of this type of systematic accounting conducted from *Northland*. It was recorded as 'a census party' but the party was not comprised of official US Census enumerators; Government census enumerators were not in the field until April 1940 for the 1940 Census.[37] It is not clear under which role and formal authority, USCG or U.S. Commissioner, Zeusler carried out this project, nor could I locate any directive that instructed him to do so. There's no indication it was carried out for reasons of safety or life or property at sea, unless the villages were in themselves perceived to be as almost at sea. The ship's log entries list the census party as going ashore with the medical and dental parties at nearly every village on the cruise route each of these two years, and the association bestows the sense that it was a sanctioned activity.

VILLAGE INSPECTIONS

Previous Bering Sea Patrol cruise year ship's logbooks list 'village inspection' as a commanding officer task on occasion, though not every village is inspected and there is no summary report in the archives for any other year. These entries usually indicate there was a particular reason for the inspection. The following entry in the USCG Annual Report for 26 July 1928 refers to an inspection of Barrow, where 'The commanding officer [Hottell] inspected the village and, in his capacity as United States Commissioner, interviewed the local United States Commissioner, Mr. Brower, Doctor Newhall, the missionary, and the Bureau of Education school-teacher, Mr. Vincent. Conditions were found to be satisfactory' (USCG, 1929, p. 38). In this phrase, the inspection of the village is tied to the role of commanding officer whereas the interviews were apparently conducted under his authority as a US Commissioner. Zeusler's summary reports were submitted to the Bering Sea Patrol Force Commander, not the supervising district court judge under whom the

[37] Census taking began in the United States in 1790 and has been conducted every 10 years since. The first effort was focused on population statistics, which were tied to the apportionment of representation in the House of Representatives. Over time, the data gathered was expanded to include economic (1820), transportation (1840), race and birth place (1870), labor (1900) and marital status (1930). The first census that included Alaska was taken in 1880. Kassinger, R. (1999) *U.S. Census: A Mirror of America*. Austin: Raintree Steck-Vaughn.

commander was commissioned, thus it appears that the effort was a Coast Guard undertaking.

For each of these years, Zeusler compiled a report titled 'Sociological Study of Villages' submitted to the Commander of the Bering Sea Patrol Force (Zeusler, 1937, p. 1; Zeusler, 1938, p. 1). Although there were data in the individual village summaries that could be thought of as sociological in content, a review of the contents reveals a series of village inspections that read as an opportunistic 'state of the villages' assessment performed in conjunction with the patrol's customary seasonal route. Included in the write-up are not only descriptions and enumerations, but drastic interventions recommended to remedy the ills reported. The reports begin with a list of topics 'studied':

> 'The NORTHLAND visited 25 villages during the past season. It was the desire of the personnel to render as much permanent service as possible to the villages as a whole and to the natives individually. Each village was thoroughly studied from the following angles:
>
> a. Its actual geographic location.
> b. The advantages and disadvantages of its location.
> c. The economical status and the possibilities of bettering it.
> d. Its physical and health conditions and its possibilities of bettering them.
> e. Its educational progress.
> f. Its contact with the white man and its affect on them.
> g. The effect of relief rendered it'.

The report format is structured by number but the categories of investigation, the order of subjects and the presentation of the data are somewhat muddled. Using no stated criteria, the 'general condition of the village' is rated as excellent, good, fair, poor or pitiful. Each report begins with a description of how the 'census party' reached the village and the ease or difficulty of landing nearby and who met them at the beach, then discusses the living conditions of the Natives, the quality and cleanliness of their housing, whether they hunt and the results of the recent season, whether alcohol is present in the village, the state of their health and what diseases are present or prevalent.

In Deering village, the report begins 'A landing was made on the beach, where the boat was met by Mr. Cross who runs a trading and liquor store. He is the operator of a 1937, 5-place Stinson airplane. The schoolteacher had left, having been

transferred to Wainwright' (Zeusler, 1937, p. 23). 'The living conditions at Diomede are not as favorable as those at King Island. It is nothing but a disorderly heap of boulders, interspersed with patches of shaggy tundra ploughed deep by recent landslides. The scenery around the village lacks beauty' (Zeusler, 1937, p. 17). The write-ups then discuss the presence of white people, who they are, what they do and who they are married to. It records the form of government if one exists, and the presence of stores, mines and lightage (the maritime equivalent of haulage) companies and the education set-up (school building, teacher, etc.). 'Most of the natives are half breeds and the interior of their houses showed the results of white man's influence. Men work at the lighterage owned by the Loman Brothers. The school building was so small that many of the natives of school age could not attend as the white children fill the building. It is a territorial school with Miss Baldwin as teacher' (Zeusler, 1937, p. 14). Zeusler is scathing in his assessment of the state of several of the villages he inspected. In the reports, he makes recommendations for sweeping changes, including relocating whole villages, removing missionaries and teachers, enlarging school buildings:

> *'St. Michael is an excellent sample of the influence of the white man. It is a very dirty village. The only way I can see to remedy this situation is to eliminate St. Michael as a village and move the natives to Stubbins. The mental attitude of the people is such that nothing can help them in their present locality. The native school teacher attempts to cooperate with the Federal officials, but the officials do not understand the psychology of the natives and their control is mostly by threat. Much could be accomplished under the leadership of Father La Nore if he had the power and authority. Nothing can be accomplished under the existing set up. This is a divided village, one-half located west of the school building and the other half to the eastward. The marshal lives on the western side while the commissioner who is also postmaster and storekeeper, lives on the other side'.*
>
> - Zeusler, 1937, p. 14.

> *'The white man has left his mark in both Teller and Teller Mission. A clean-out alone will remedy the poor condition that exists at this village. The U.S. Commissioner, who is married to a native woman, is not setting much of an example for the natives. The missionary, Mr. Skavan, is one of the poorest examples of a missionary that I have ever seen.'*
>
> - Zeusler, 1937, p. 15.

> '*In Wales, the Presbyterian missionary, Miss Stauffer, is also a nurse. Detected friction between missionary and the school teacher, Mr. and Mrs. Hapgood. Due to the lack of cooperation between the nurse, Miss Stauffer and the school teacher, little progress is being made in this village. Mrs. Stauffer understands the psychology of the natives, whereas the schoolteacher is new and inexperienced. A divided responsibility is not good. A complete overhaul is necessary in this village'.*
>
> - Zeusler, 1937, p. 28.

In Shishmaref, Zeusler reported, 'All the white men here have white wives' (Zeusler, 1937, p. 24). There is also the occasional tidbit, such as the following under Native food; 'The clams from the contents of the stomach of Walrus are eaten. Father Hubbard claims they are delicious' In Point Lay, 'Very few walrus are caught here, only about ten being obtained last year. What little ivory is carved shows very poor workmanship'. But in its favor, 'This village has an ideal location. A shortage of driftwood for fuel is gradually eliminating the population. With a nurse and a good school teacher much progress would be made if fuel were available. Some action must be taken by the Government to help the natives of this village' (Zeusler, 1937, p. 11).

The section on St. Lawrence Island notes that, 'The teachers (Savoonga and Gambell), and the nurse (Savoonga) are Government employees. The missionary (Gambell), Ann Hanson, is from the Presbyterian Church. No marshals or commissioners are appointed, but a mayor and a village council are elected in each village by popular vote to administer the affairs of the village. Each village has a store which is managed by an elected board of native directors. The board elects the storekeeper, the chief, the reindeer herder, sets the prices and handles the finances. The natives have no specific set of rules but follow custom to a great extent. The commanding officer was called in on a meeting in regard to the issuance of certain local ordinances affecting the welfare of the village of Gambell and bordering on their customs' (Zeusler, 1937, p. 10). Recall from Pause II that one of those customs topics was marriage. He also brings up the topic of visits between Siberia and Natives from St. Lawrence, a situation that was similar to the situation in Little Diomede Island. 'By reason of its proximity to Siberia, regular visits are made back and forth. No doubt many of the present natives are of Siberian origin' (Zeusler, 1937, p. 10).

Nash Harbor: ‘This village is in pitiful condition. In order to aid the natives a complete cleanup is necessary. Government aid is more necessary at Nash Harbor than at any of the villages. A nurse is absolutely necessary. The natives would like the trapping date for fox opened December 1 instead of November 15th because skins are not prime on that earlier date. They want to extend the closing date from February 28th to March 15th. This appears reasonable as climatic conditions are

somewhat different on the island than on the mainland. They have very little snow and seasons are mild. The ice went out on the last part of April. They would like a community store, but the large amount of money they owe to the Loman Brothers at Cape Etolin prevents the establishment of their own store. The 6,000 reindeer on the island belong to Loman and they pay $25 for one deer'.

Each village has its own section in the report, some a brief and others more comprehensive. There is no summary, conclusions or recommendations attached to the report, but the 'census' was not the only activity of this type that Zeusler carried out during his time as commander of *Northland*. He also distributed a questionnaire to various officials in the same villages.

THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The questionnaire combined questions about the natural environment; (wind, current, ice), the condition and situation of Natives (liquor, citizenship and self-sufficiency), and queries what more the Coast Guard can do to assist locals during Bering Sea cruises (See Appendix C for the complete list of questions). The respondents included government nurses, judges, commissioners and missionaries.

Arthur Nagozruk, Jr. was one of the respondents. At the time he answered the questionnaire, he was the government schoolteacher on Nunivak Island in the village of Nash Harbor (mentioned in the village inspection report of 1937 as 'pitiful'). He was born in the coastal village of Wales where his parents died when he was young and the local missionary Lopp family raised him until he was sent to a Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) school near Anchorage (recall the Lopps are the same couple mentioned in Pause III). Nagozruk was the first Inupiaq to graduate from the University of Alaska after serving in the Army in the Aleutians during WWI. Arthur Nagozruk, (UAF, Online). Among his many responses, Nagozruk used the questionnaire to argue for greater self-determination for Natives on the island, 'I would encourage the organization under Wheeler Howard Act for the entire Nunivak Island' (Nagozruk, 1937).

Greater self-governance for Alaska Natives was a very recent possibility for native Alaskans under an extension of the 1934 Wheeler-Howard Act (Indian Reorganization Act or IRA). In 1936, Congress passed the Composite Indian Reorganization Act for Alaska (CIRA) that amended the IRA to account for the way that Native lands had been categorized in the Territory. The Alaska Act also allowed the Secretary of the Interior to establish new reservations in Alaska and several were created, including Venetie, Karluk, Akutan, Diomede, Unalakleet, and Wales (US Congress, CIR). However, Nunivak Island was declared a reservation for the Department of Agriculture by Executive order in 1929, precluding the possibility of establishing it as an area of self-rule for the indigenous population. Self-rule, citizenship and voting rights for Native Alaskans were in flux.

Before 1924, to become citizens Natives had to apply, give up their tribal affiliations and 'adopt the habits of civilized life' as attested to by five white citizens who were permanent residents of the Territory for at least one year. In 1924, that changed when Congress enacted the Indian Citizenship Act (ICA). The legislation granted citizenship to all American Indian and Alaska Native people not already citizens of the United States. They did not have to apply nor give up indigenous affiliations to become U.S. citizens. One year later, in 1925, the Seventh Alaska Territorial Legislature enacted a law 'requiring that voters in territorial elections be able to read and write the English language' (Haycox, 1986). The last census estimated the illiteracy rate among 'Indians' 21 year of age and over 67% for males and 73% for females. As there was no written language for any of the indigenous people of Alaska at the time, that rule disenfranchised most of the people the ICA was intended to reach. So, despite being citizens de facto, Zeusler's 1938 recommendations to the Bering Sea Patrol Force Commander indicates continued confusion, or at least an ambivalence about the status of citizen.

> *'Most having expressed the desire to be wards of the Government and many have suggested the establishment of Government reservations to include the various villages and in that way eliminate contact with the white man, except of course, the teacher, the nurse, the doctor and the missionary. Some definite decision should be rendered in regard to the status of the native at present. I gather from the solicitor's decision of Feb., 1932 that they have dual status - wards of the Government and also that of citizens. Some of the more clever natives are using this status to their advantage. If a certain villages' action is contrary to their interests they immediately are wards, but let there be a prohibition of certain liberties, etc., on those wards of the Government, then they are citizens. This status should be clear cut and if they are wards let the government go in and whole heartedly better the conditions of the natives. If they are citizens, let them take their places with their white brothers and strive for*

themselves. The combined status is making them loafers and shirkers and they are becoming generally useless'.

Zeusler, 1938, Memo pp. 1-2.

Returning to the questionnaire, two of Zeusler's questions relate to walrus and are connected to self-sufficiency via traditional hunting practices. 1) Are the walrus and seals on the increase or decrease? 2) Will the present rate of killing the walrus exterminate them? This topic was likely at the top of his mind for Zeusler, as *Northland* had been directly engaged with remediating hardship and hunger due to poor walrus hunting results. On at least one occasion where ice conditions had receded too far for Native oomiak's,[38] N*orthland's* officers and motor surfboats had taken Natives on board and successfully hunted for Walrus and on a number of occasions in 1938, ship's rations were distributed to villages in response to famine.

'Medical, dental and census parties departed for Teller. Delivered to Mrs. Thompson one walrus to assist in native food supply. Weighed anchor, set course for 209º at 110 rpm enroute water hole at Fox Creek'.

- Ship's Log, 9 July 1938.[39]

'*7:15 took on board walrus shot by ship's personnel. 9:15 delivered walrus to natives [Point Hope]'.*

- Ship's Log, 12 July 1938.

'…skirting ice, sighted herd of 30 walrus while departing Gambell'.

- Ship's Log, 13 July 1938.

'Issued 101 rations to Wainwright natives'.

- Ship's Log, 4 August 1938.

'Received one sack of mail for Postmaster at Nome and one sack for Postmaster at Point Lay. Delivered to Jim Allen one barrel of seal shoulders and to Miss Keaton, government nurse, one barrel of seal shoulders and 20 lbs. seal concentrate for distribution to destitute natives of village. Made preparations for getting underway'.

- Ship's Log, 5 August 1938.

Commander Zeusler corresponded in 1939 with Claude M. Hirst, General Superintendent of the Office of Indian Affairs in Juneau, on the topic, basing his comments on information gathered from the questionnaire and his experiences on

[38] Oomiaks are Native skin boats.

[39] Just before delivering the walrus, Northland was in continuous radio contact ship with Howard Hughes' plane flying above, and 'transmitted homing signals for plane almost continuously until 1015, position 66-00N, Long. 168-05W, when plane changed course for Fairbanks' (Ship's Log, 9 July 1938).

the Bering Sea Patrol more generally. 'Ice conditions have considerable to do with the amount of walrus and also seal seen. Some years are plentiful, while other years ice conditions makes hunting them almost impossible. There is no doubt that there is some promiscuous killing of walrus for tusks alone. That is being indulged in by the King Islanders, Diomede Islanders and to a certain extent by the St. Lawrence Islanders and Prince of Wales natives'. Islanders have said that ivory is their only saleable article. 'I personally explained to them the situation and warned them that if this killing did continue, action would have to be taken to prevent it' and then noted that enforcement would be practically impossible' (Zeusler, 1939, p. 1)

'I sincerely hope no treaty is signed with Russia banning the killing of walrus even for one year. That would be a direct blow on Diomede Islanders, King Islanders, and St. Lawrence Islanders who are practically self-supporting now. To take away from them their walrus would require placing them on a dole. I am unalterably opposed to that' (Zeusler, 1939, p. 1).

The Official Census

Northland was not carrying census enumerators during the 1937 and 1938 cruises, but censuses were carried out in Alaska beginning in 1880.[40] In the early years of census taking, U.S. Commissioners and their aides were charged with the enumeration tasks, so it is possible that the commanding officers who had US Commissioner status could have been involved in earlier or later census taking, but I did not find evidence of this in the ship's logbooks.

ALASKA PAUSE III SUMMARY

Assistant Surgeon M.L. Mould, United States Public Health Service, was the Medical Officer assigned to *Northland* during the 1938 cruise. In his 1938 Cruise Report to

[40] The Census Bulletins for Alaska 1910, 1920 and 1930 reflect the kinds of socio-political tensions that Margaret Anderson found were embedded in the census collecting, data gathered and usage of the results 'outside,' especially those connected to race and immigration (Anderson, 2015).

the Public Health Service, Mould expressed the trepidation he initially felt about the assignment: 'So many wild tales had reached me about conditions I would find and in the work that was to be done, that I felt I was defeated before I started' but found he enjoyed the contact with Natives and had excellent support from his executive officer Lieut. Commander Serratt and from *Northland's* crew. His observations about the relationship between Native Alaskans and *Northland* convey a sense of how the ship was perceived by villagers:

> *'To the man in the States the Northland is a ship of the Coast Guard and she belongs as such to Uncle Sam. But to the natives the NORTHLAND belongs to them. They look upon her as their Oomiak-puk,[41] the men upon her are their friends, the doctor and the dentist that come with her are they only ones they ever see, and she is the descendent of the Bear which was "their ship" before the NORTHLAND was built. They are able to discuss their legal and family problems with her captain and from him get advice which they have taken in every instance'.*
>
> - M.L. Mould, 1938, p. 5.

The event of the 'sociological study' village inspection project provides further evidence that *Northland* and its officers accrued a wide purview as an active 'floating government' ship, derived from a number of factors including the longevity of the Bering Sea Patrol, its extensive and exceptional duties, the relationships built over time with local populations, legal authority invested in U.S. commissioners and Deputy Marshals, etc. Zeusler himself, after many years involved with the patrol[42], had developed his own relationships and attitudes that are clearly imbedded in the contents of the report (He also collected data for at least one pet project (a chain of radio stations and licensed operators that would directly connect the villages of the Bering Sea Patrol to one another).

The ship's contribution to the assemblage surfaced through mobility, the capacity to complete a circuit of 20+ villages in both 1937 and 1938, but also its ice-breaking capabilities without which the inspections could not have taken place. The shape of the hull, the dual-electric, oil-fueled engines and the ice-navigation capabilities of the officers were critical components of the ship's operations in the Bering Sea and Arctic Ocean. The surf boats it carried, and davits which lowered them to the water, enabled the 'census party' to reach the shore and villages in each location.

[41] Oomiak-puk, meaning 'big oomiak'.

[42] Zeusler had been assigned to the Unalga, Bear, McCulloch and Chelan before commanding Northland.

Alaska Pause IV – Chasing *Baychimo*: THE 'GHOST SHIP OF THE ARCTIC'

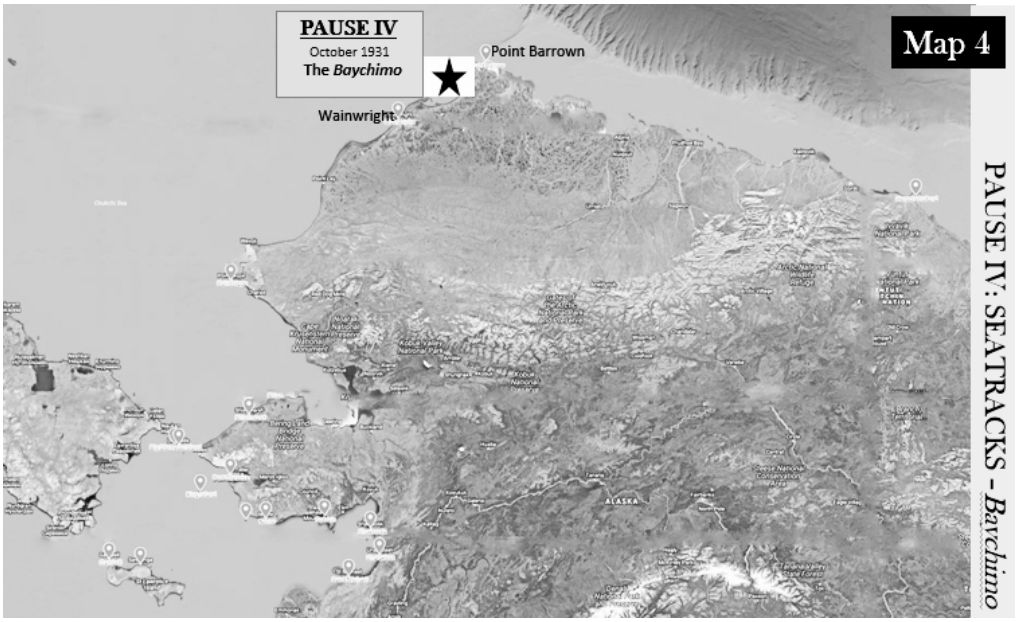


Figure 37. Pause Map 4.
Source: Author. Created 2018.

In the waning weeks of September 1931, the Hudson's Bay Company steamer *Baychimo* fought the floes of new ice forming off the shores of the Arctic Ocean while heading for Barrow. It was on its seasonal circuit supplying the company's northernmost posts and collecting the furs, ivory and minerals secured by the posts over the summer season. *Baychimo* was a steel-hulled, ice-hardened vessel built in Sweden for operations in the frigid Baltic Sea. But it was no icebreaker and winter was closing in rapidly and with it, navigable waters. *Northland*, commanded by Captain E.D. Jones, had spotted the ship bucking ice on August 12 at 4:16 p.m. The cutter took note of *Baychimo's* position and stayed out of the ice pack (Ship's Log, 12 August 1931).

The new seasonal ice was forming rapidly and closing leads and blocking *Baychimo's* path. [43] It was caught in heavy drift ice on all sides: '…we tried to break through the barrier of loose ice-pans cemented together with new slush ice and jammed tight by onshore currents and winds. Every little chunk we put behind us got in our way, because if we backed into these they might cut our propeller blades clear off'

[43] 'Leads' are navigable passages through *floating* ice (Armstrong *et al.*, 1966, p. 28).

(Robertson, 1985, p. 181). Captain Sydney Cornwall had delayed its departure from Arctic waters too late. On Thursday, October 6th the vessel became firmly wedged in a huge pan of ice between Wainwright and Barrow.[44] It belonged to the sea and ice from that point forward, and its whereabouts remain a mystery.

The cautionary story of *Baychimo* illustrates how *Northland's* ability to perform the Coast Guard's core duty to protect life and property at sea was constrained when that life and property was entangled with Arctic ice. Before long, *Baychimo* and the ice pan became a kind of circulating frozen, floating dry dock. Not free flowing, as its position dictated by the currents and wind action of the Beaufort and Chukchi Seas. Was *Baychimo* then in open waters subject to civil salvage, or on land? And was it possible to govern the Bering Sea Patrol area if ships roamed freely and unpredictably for years on ice and currents with no human on board?

Whereas fog, wind and wave action were the key weather variables ships encountered in the south Bering Sea, further north the formation and behavior of ice in conjunction with wind and currents were also navigational issues. As early as August 13, *Northland* was already dealing with its own ice challenges. A ship's log that states 'underway at various speeds and courses,' shows it was working through ice and/or rough seas. On that day, *Northland* reported: 'Working through heavy ice. Shut down starboard main engine. Underway at various speeds on various courses standing to southwest through heavy ice. At 5:00 clear of ice' (Ship's Log, 13 August 1931). *Northland's* ice-breaking capabilities were often called upon to cut a path though the ice for ships unable to break through on their own.

The day *Baychimo* was 'grounded' on ice, *Northland* was not in position to provide assistance. It was over 650 nautical miles south of Wainwright at the entrance to Golofin Bay, winding up its 1931 cruise year with a few final medical/dental forays. There is no mention in the logs of *Baychimo's* troubles. 'Crew performed morning routine. Deck force chipping, scraping and red-lining waterways and painting skylight trunks. Held quarters followed by general quarters. Issued (12) night rations'. The same types of routines discussed in the previous section. The next day,

[44] The date the ship got 'stuck' is recorded variously, as there were several days of immobility during which the Captain still held out hope for a shift in the wind direction and a way through the ice.

it steamed into Golofin Bay and the medical and dental officers went ashore to render aid while the crew continued to work on the ship, and then returned (Ship's Logs, 6 & 7 October 1931).

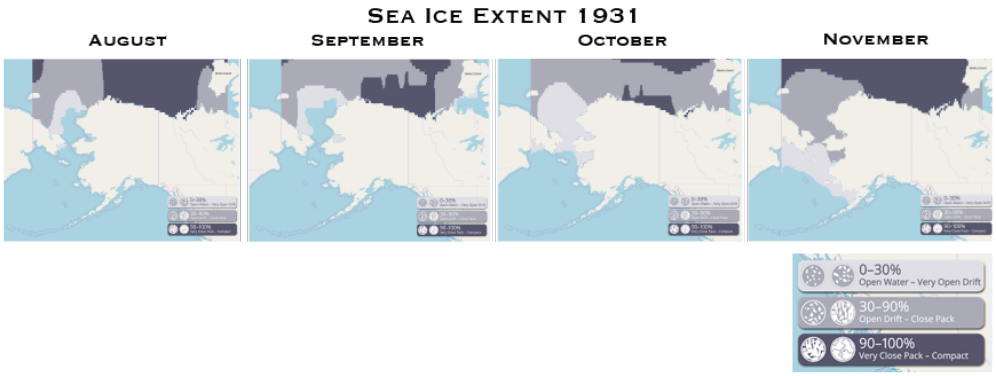


Figure 38. Sea ice progression in 1931.
Source: Sea Ice Atlas data from the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Agency, Washington, D.C. & University of Alaska, Fairbanks. http://Seaiceatlas.snap.uaf.edu.

On *Baychimo*, twenty-three-year-old company accountant Richard Bonnycastle's diary entries describe the struggle against the ice. 'S'ept. 18, 1931, on the Baychimo. We got under way at 3:30 a.m., and at 4 I got up and joined the captain at the masthead. The ice-fields had completely evaporated. But we hit one little jackpot, a hefty, solid chunk of ice we couldn't shake off for 40 minutes. We worked to port and starboard; it turned with us. We went astern and it came too. We charged other ice and it wouldn't budge. It was most exasperating'. He described manoeuvring the ship to reach an opening in the ice; the ship tried a four point turn, backing into the ice, butting forward, and repeating. Somehow, 'full ahead' translated to 'full astern' in the engine room, but 'wonderfully, no damage was done'. One more 'full astern' and they 'fairly flew out of the ice. It was a miracle we did not wreck the ship, strip our propeller, and carry away the rudder. The old Baychimo bears a charmed life'. Bonneycastle wrote, 'We reached Point Barrow and rounded it, hauling up to the village about 10 miles to the southwest and anchoring inside a pan of heavy, grounded ice. Outside, the floe was moving steadily to the northeast. Down the coast, as far as the eye could see, there was nothing but solid ice right against the beach' (Robertson, 1985, p. 182).

Charles Brower, a white trader and former whaling captain settled in Barrow in the 1880s. He observed the ship's difficulties from onshore: 'The Bay Chimo returned on the 18th but the ice was all in along the coast and had great difficulty in making the point from there down to the station there was a lead of water inside the ground ice so she came along as far as here below the station the pack was in on the beach. So here she anchored half a mile from the house. Unable to proceed. Some of the crew came ashore and spent a short while with us' (Brower, 1969, p. 49).

The night of September 22nd, Brower observed the wind had hauled to the east and the ice moved off outside the ridge, but 'still there was no chance for the Bay Chimo to get out. In the afternoon the ship tried to buck through the ridge but was unable to make any headway' (Brower, 1969, p. 49). Brower sent his son and some men out with dynamite to blow up the ridge and let them through. 'Five shots did the business and then the ship bucked her way through and was off for the south. Unluckily for them, the wind' (Brower, 1969, p. 50).

Figure 39. *Baychimo* trapped in Ice, c. 1931.
Source: Alaska and Polar Regions Collections, University of Alaska, Fairbanks.

After several days hoping for a shift in the ice pack, Cornwall surrendered to wintering over, assuming his ship was icebound with no prospects of release until

summer 1932. A few of the crew made ready to winter over on land, building a shack made of ship's hatches and available lumber to guard its contents. 'Captain Cornwall has built a house on the beach from woodwork and hatches of the ship and has fairly good quarters for wintering and the crew are off the ship and are making the best of their forced stay in the Arctic' (Brower, 1969, p. 50).

By maintaining a 'skeleton crew' and staying with the ship, prepared to board it as soon as it was free of the ice, the Hudson's Bay Company was keeping possession of the ship and its valuable contents. Had it discharged the entire crew and left the ship over winter in the ice, the vessel would have been subject to civil salvage.[45] A vessel is subject to salvage by a third party provided the vessel is demonstrably in peril and the master has dismissed or authorized the crew to abandon ship. There can be little doubt as to the *Baychimo's* peril; 'A little while back there came a crush where they are laying and the ship shoved in almost to the beach with only a few inches of water to spare' (Brower, 1969, p. 52).

Planes were brought in to transport the departing crew to Nome. 'There were two planes making three trips each, some of the people go out on the last sailing of the Vic [S.S. Victoria] but the last ones got away on the Northland' (Brower, 1969, p. 51). The log notes for October 24 at 4:20 p.m. state that 'Cecil R. Duffield, George Wright and Duncan Robertson, members of crew of British steamer Bay Chimo who had arrived at Nome by airplane this date and who are unable to get passage to Seattle on a commercial vessel, came on board for transportation to Seattle. Anchored as before' (Ship's Log, 24 October 1931). In 1931, this was *Northland's* direct involvement with the ship. Subsequent encounters would be more direct.

Jim Allen was another local white trader who had found out *Baychimo* was stuck on the ice and asked his Alaska Native employee William Bodfish and his friends Freddie and Sheldon to go and check on the ship. 'When we reached opposite the *Baychimo*, we stopped there and checked the ice to see if it was strong enough to go out on. It was about four inches thick, five in some places. So we drove out there

[45] The 37 Stat 1658, Treaty Series 576: Assistance and Salvage at Sea, treaty of 1910, was in force in the U.S. as of 1 March 1913. The treaty provides for compensation when salvaging a ship or contents. There is no equivalent for vehicles in distress on land.

and stopped our team right on the young ice'. The three men were invited to stay overnight, so took the dogs back to land and stayed over. Allen made a deal to sell the Captain reindeer meat, and while delivering the meat, Bodfish transported several under-dressed crewmembers from what they'd come to call 'Chimo Camp' back to the village (Bodfish, 1991, pp. 104-5). ‘Chimo Camp’, though, was a precarious place.

'During a violent gale on Thanksgiving Day, November 26, a tongue of ice (it is inferred) came in, scooped up the ship, and carried her off' (*Geographical Journal*, 477). Brower’s diary says, 'At daylight the ship was gone, but where to date had not heard. Probably drifted north and crushed on Sea Horse Islands. Waiting for more definite news. Crew all ashore in house. In morning weather finer and they had a look up the coast about 10 miles but no ship. The ice on the beach at Barrow crashed high on the sand making a ridge on the shore about 20 feet high' (Brower, 1969, p. 51). The ridge was, 'so high, in fact, when the men came out from the house after the storm they first assumed the vessel to be crushed and buried out of sight beneath the ridge' (Brower, 1969, p. 477).

And a news bulletin prematurely reported the ship's demise, 'Ice Wins Final Victory. The steamer Baychimo, frozen fast with its $1,000,000 cargo of furs in the Alaskan pack north of Wainwright last September, has now been ground to bits by enormous ice floes' (*International News Bulletin*, 1931) Lacking evidence of the vanished vessel, the news was released with a photo of a nearby beach with a few seals on it. Cornwell and the remaining crew spent several futile days searching on the coast after the snow, despite also believing the ship had been crushed and sunk in the sea.

If it remained intact and they did not reclaim it, it would be technically ‘adrift’ and thus abandoned and subject to salvage. The Hudson’s Bay crew did not find it, but others did and assumed as it was unmanned, the contents were available for the taking. 'It drifted out', wrote William Bodfish, 'but it came back two more times. One time we were able to salvage lots of good stuff; life boats, chairs, mirrors and compasses. Finally that ship disappeared and we never saw it again' (Bodfish, 1991, p. 105). Over the next years, the ship was repeatedly sighted, boarded, and relieved

of more of its contents. There was no serious effort to salvage the ship itself, although it was intact save a broken propeller.

The storm pushed the ice floe off shore and the ship with it, still firmly embedded in the pan. It was sighted several weeks later on December 15, 1933. 'She came drifting with the ice north of Sea Horse Islands, about 12 miles south-west from Barrow Village and 9 miles off-shore. At this time a white man, assisted by three natives, salvaged fifteen bales of furs and perhaps some other things. It remained until Christmas and then drifted off with the pack to the south-west.' In March, 'Baychimo returned within 6 miles of shore. One Eskimo boarded her and got a bear skin, an ivory cribbage board, and some clothes' (*Geographical Journal,* 1933, p. 477).

The next year in August *Baychimo* reappeared near Barrow, 9 miles off shore. 'A considerable party with three light-power boats got out to her in sixteen hours of dragging the boats over floes and launching them in clear patches in between. They were aboard the ship about five hours and loaded up with material that was secondhand but of great value to them - rifles, shot guns, cameras, clothing, etc. Meantime a strong wind had blown up from landward. It took the party four days of portagings and launchings to get back over the pack into the open water nearer the land, and then eight hours under power to reach shore. In view of the apparent thickness of the flow and the condition of the vessel, it seems about an even guess as to whether the ice has since then been so crushed that the ship has fallen into the water' (*Geographical Journal*, 1933, p. 477). The *Northland*, along with many others, would next encounter *Baychimo* in 1933, two years after it was swept off shore.

A Small Community of Arctic Ships

The *Northland* and *Baychimo* were known to each other. There were only a small number of ships that regularly plied the Bering Sea and Arctic Ocean in the open water season. The Coast Guard cutters kept a watchful eye on them as part of its core duty to protect life and property at sea. *Northland's* logbook lists every sighting, inspection, rescue and search for each ship by name, time and location.

'Sighted BAYCHIMO in the ice a little eastward of Point Barrow'.

- Ship's Log, 28 July 1929.

'Anchored as before. S.S. BALDWIN stood in and anchored'.

- Ship's Log, 21 October 1933.

'Received information from Barrow that the Schooner C.S. HOLMES left Wainwright 14 days ago and is probably south of Bering Strait. That the S.S. NORTHSTAR has left Wainwright and is 58 miles from Point Lay, and that the Canadian S.S. POINT LOCHE is bound South from the Arctic. M.S. TRADER has completed her Arctic Cruise and is now bound for Nome. Natives of Diomedes report drift ice off Coast Cape, Siberia'.

- Ship's Log, 14 September 1937.

'Boarded the TRADER. American, John Buckland Master, Seattle Washington to Barrow Alaska, general cargo, no violations. Boarded the C.S. HOMES, American, P.J. Palsson Master. Nome Alaska to Herschel Island, general cargo, no violations'.

- Ship's Log, 13 August 1933.

When in close proximity, one of *Northland's* officers would lower a boat and meet with the ship's captain to pass news regarding ice conditions and any other concerns that they might have.

'Lowered boat #1 Delivered weather and ice information to SCHR. C.S. HOLMES, anchored nearby. Dispatched boat #5 to survey ice back to the northward; boat #6 to Icy Cape to scout ice conditions to eastward and northward of that point'.

- Ship's Log, 11 August 1937.

'Ship's heading 310º true. Steering various courses, working through scattered drift ice. 4:00 gas schooner TRADER of Nome 24 hours out of Wainwright for Barrow, 12 hours overdue, probably unable to pass ice at Seahorse Isl.'.

- Ship's Log, 16 August 1932.

'Received information from Barrow that the Schooner C.S. HOLMES left Wainwright 14 days ago and is probably south of Bering Strait'.

- Ship's Log, 14 September 1937.

At times, *Northland* was searching for the remains of a ship and for survivors.

'10:27: Searching beach for wreckage and survivors from motorship 'GOOD HOPE. No sign of wreckage found, Changed course to 300) p.g.c.'.

- Ship's Log, 14 October 1933.

'6:00 a.m. Searching party departed in boat #6 to search for native in small boat unreported since Saturday, 27 August 1938 on trip from SHAKTOLIK to BONANZA.'

- Ship's Log, 31 August 1938.

AUGUST 11, 1933: THE GHOST SHIP EMERGED

The *Northland,* commanded in 1933 by Stanley V. Parker, was not actively pursuing *Baychimo*, but its officers and crew were no doubt keen to locate it. Max Miller wrote that there was an argument ongoing aboard *Northland*, 'to do with our chances this year of seeing the Baychimo…she is still drifting around out there, her side stoved in, her hull lying on an ice-floe. The summer currents still carry her nobody knows where but periodically they carry her back again' (Miller, 1936, p. 151). Isobel Hutchison, a British Botanist collecting samples for Cambridge University, was traveling on *Trader*. She described much the same conversation aboard *Trader* while watching *Northland* pass by Cape Lay. 'I wonder, said Kari [the captain's brother] if we shall meet Baychimo this year?' His brother Ira replied, 'I guess she is over to Siberia long ago' (Hutchison, 1934, p. 106).

Even if unlikely, the possibility of catching up with it was intriguing to those three. 'The chance of playing pirate is one which would be possible in few waters, save the icebound Beaufort Sea, where vessels are too rare, and navigation too difficult, to make the pursuit of a derelict possible' (Hutchison, 1934, p. 106). The entry for Aug 11 in Charles Brower's diary notes, 'Saw Baychimo offshore Wainwright' (Brower, 1969, no page number). That same day, *Northland* passed Icy Cape. The ship's log entry states, 'At 4:20 p.m. sighted vessel in ice bearing 338º true, believed to be BAYCHIMO. Delivered 2 sacks of mail and three boxes of freight for James Allen. At 4:20 medical and dental officers ashore to render medical treatment' (Ship's Log, 11 August 1933). The terse entry little reflects the excitement the crew must have felt at seeing the 'ghost ship', though clearly there was. Quickly, the sighting was reported to Seattle USCG HQ and several days later, the *New York Times* printed an article with the headline, 'Hudson's Bay 'Ghost Ship' Found by Revenue Cutter.' Briefly, the article read:

> *'The battered hulk of the Hudson's Bay Company 'ghost ship' Baychimo, for two years a plaything of the Arctic ice near Point Barrow, has again been sighted. Coast Guard headquarters here received a message from the cutter Northland today saying it had found the fur trader about ten miles off Wainwright, apparently close to where the ice pack closed in on her in September 1931. 'Jim Allen and natives are aboard her,' the Northland wirelessed. The vessel was returning from a trip to the western Arctic posts with a valuable cargo of fur when caught in the ice. The crew abandoned the vessel and the cargo was* salvaged.'
>
> - *New York Times*, 13 August 1933, p. 1.

Soon after *Trader* anchored in Wainwright on August 11, Dick Hall approached in a skiff with the news that *Baychimo* had been located 12 miles off shore. Hall and his two associates climbed on board and Ira pulled the anchor to pursue the ship where it lay, '…in the midst of moving floes'. Several umiaks from Wainwright (native skin boats) were visible, empty on the ice. Their owners were already at the derelict. Kari acting as ice master, directed Pete through the narrow leads. A last lead took them straight to the ice pan *Baychimo* rested upon, 'her giant hull, rust-stained and battered by the frozen seas, loomed tower like above the little *Trader*'. Their ship was too small to have a hope of salvaging the ship itself, but Hutchison and the Palsson's took a number of items from the ship, and steamed for Wainwright' (Hutchison, 1934, p. 112).

The *Northland* had anchored to a nearby ice cake and observed the activity around the *Baychimo* from a distance. The 1933 annual cruise report says photographs were taken, but they are not available in the archives. Several accounts suggest Commander Parker wished to salvage the ship, but it's more likely that *Northland* was standing by to ensure *Trade*r made it safely away. More than once, *Northland* had broken a path for *Trader* to follow or towed it safely out of a fix. Hutchison wrote, 'At last we reached open water, there, almost lost in the fast-gathering mists of approaching midnight, stood the ghostly grey hull of *Northland*' (Hutchison, 1934, p. 112).

Hutchison was critical of *Northland's* position. 'The revenue cutter had anchored at the edge of the floes, afraid to advance into the shifting ice. On reaching Wainwright she too had turned on the track of the *Baychimo* with the intention of possibly blasting her free of the ice and towing her inshore, to the prize of the Wainwright natives' (Hutchison, 1934, p. 112). It is true that the 20th-century Coast Guard cutter captains in the Bering Sea Patrol proceeded with caution, aware of the ship's limitations with respect to power and icebreaking and of unpredictability of weather and ice conditions.

Fredlich Rainey, a scientist working on Smithsonian digs, described the captain of *Northland* in 1937 Frederick Zeusler as, 'Basically a nervous person, operating in very stormy sea along dangerous coasts, he would still take his ship into precarious

positions if an emergency required it, or even if he felt it was part of his duty. Those tight spots were hard on his crew and hard on him' (Rainey, 1991, p. 56). Near Herschel, Gus Masik's assessment was caustic, 'This is the most- god-forsaken corner of Uncle Sam's attic; the revenue cutter never gets in here - guess she's afraid to scrape the paint off in the ice' (Hutchison, 1934, p. 152).

The *Baychimo* was off again the morning after they boarded, but Hutchison saw it one more time. 'Far out over the ice-field, a little ahead of us now, rode the uncanny Baychimo, travelling with the current towards Barrow. Everything was still with the unearthly stillness of ice, which gives the sensation of being in another world' (Hutchison, 1934, p. 121). Charles Brower's diary noted, 'Aug 24 Baychimo drifted by Barrow going North' (Brower, 1969, p. 52). The next time it was sighted, it was a *fata morgana,* a complex mirage born of the special atmospheric condition in the Arctic.[46] Wrote Hutchison, 'Sometimes through the glasses we could see reflected the mirage of ice-field and shore far to the northward, hanging upside down in the sky. Our last glimpse of Baychimo was in this curious manner, standing on her head in a mirage. She appeared to be still some fifteen miles to the southward of us, but was traveling with the current steadily north, and a day later was no longer visible' (Hutchison, 1934, p. 124). Arnold Morton, an oceanographer on the 1937 Bering Sea Patrol cruise had a similar experience. He wrote in his diary on June 12, 1937; 'As I was writing John called me to see a mirage. To the southwest and open sea there was a vision of cliffs rising from the sea. On some of these cliffs huge glaciers came down to the water's edge. It was a most astonishing illusion evidently caused by heated air rising from the water' [47] (Morton, 1937, p. 18).

Hutchison's was the last reported mirage of *Baychimo* but, the ship was seen again in September 1935 and November 1939 near Wainwright, Alaska. Explorers, scientists and Inuit inhabitants of the western Arctic reported "scores" of sightings in the post-war era. In March 1962, a group of Inuit kayaking in the Beaufort Sea once

[46] 'A *fata morgana* is a complex mirage in which distant objects are distorted as well as elongated vertically'. They sometimes appear in the Arctic due to a temperature inversion, where cold air lies close to the ground with warmer air above it. Since cold air is denser than warm air, it bends light towards the eyes of someone standing on the ground, changing how a distant object appears. Superior mirages can produce a few different types of images' (National Snow and Ice Data Center, 2018, accessed online).

[47] 'Distant objects can appear to float high above their actual position, for example a boat can look like it is floating in the sky, or an object below the horizon can become visible' (National Snow and Ice Data Center, 2018, accessed online).

again glimpsed the ship. Finally, in 1969, as the U.S. oil tanker Manhattan was making its controversial crossing of the Northwest Passage, a party of Inuit said they saw *Baychimo* floating between Point Barrow and Icy Cape, Alaska. It was the last time anyone claimed to have seen the deserted vessel' (Boswell, 2006, p. 6).

Recent interest in the ship's history and whereabouts has emerged from two sources. First, from a recent discovery by anthropologist Joshua Reuther at the Museum of the North at the University of Alaska, Fairbanks and secondly, from a heritage project which sought to identify the location and condition of all shipwrecks along the coast of Alaska. In the first instance, it would seem *Northland* once again played a role, this time by transporting artefacts taken from the ship soon after its abandonment. For years the 13 items were stored in a mislabelled box in the museum basement, until Reuther came across them and unravelled the mystery. He and researcher Jason Rogers discovered that, in 1933 Geist and his crew left Savoonga on the United States Coast Guard cutter *Northland* on 23 September and were waylaid in Nome for a month due to weather (Geist & Rainey, 1936, p. 472). 'We surmise that on 17 July 1933, during Trader 's voyage to Savoonga, that Palsson gave one of Geist's crew the ethnographic materials from Baychimo' (Reuther & Rogers, 2016, p. 465). Geist subsequently deposited the artefacts at the nascent University of Alaska Museum in Fairbanks where Reuther came across them.

Figure 40. Joshua Ruether and *Baychimo* artifacts.
Source: Author Photo, 20 July 2018.

In 2006, an Alaska government project to locate and protect historic shipwrecks included a search for *Baychimo* in its remit. 'The state's continental shelf is the final resting place for more than 4,000 known shipwrecks, many of which have historical or archaeological significance. In many instances, archaeologists believe that the cold North Pacific waters have contributed to an enhanced state of preservation' (McMahan *et al*., p. 1). As a part of the project, University of Alaska marine John Kelley reported as 'hoping a new sea floor survey of the state's shipwrecks could identify the final resting place of the legendary vessel -- if the 73-metre ship has succumbed to the waves. Maybe it'll show up', said Kelley, part of a team charting the estimated 4,000 sunken ships along the Alaskan shore for a new marine heritage preservation program. 'I think by now we all feel it's at the bottom somewhere along the coast' (Boswell, 2006, p. 7). But it didn't show up, and it hasn't been located as yet. The derelict's body has never been found and it remains a 'cold case.'

Alaska Pause IV Summary

The *Baychimo* became a mobile, nautical ruin, captured by ice and impervious to salvage, its subsequent descent into dereliction was witnessed and exploited by

persons from Nome, Wainwright and passing ships including *Trader*. In 1931, *Northland* had no direct contact with the ship, save transporting some of the shipless crew from Nome to Seattle. But its reappearance, after a general acceptance it had been taken by the sea, was witnessed by *Northland* as it stood by and watched the extraction of furs, ivory, guns and the like. *Baychimo* was still locked in an embrace with the ice pan, and *Northland's* executive officer probably knew it was not capable of extracting it from the ice and towing it to Nome, where it could be salvaged. Instead, *Northland* stood by and observed the activities from a distance, surveilling for a purpose.

As with Bogoslof, there was a mystery-inspired fascination with 'the ghost ship' *Baychimo* and its more-than-human independent travels. This may account for *Northland's* observer stance, but more likely the ship was standing by in case the nautical raiders got into trouble in the ice. The terse 'Sighted BAYCHIMO' entry in the ship's log isn't helpful in understanding the ship's orientation to the vessel. Certainly, from Hutchison's account, *Trader* was at considerable risk with he freeboard nearly even with the water and the leads opening and closing chaotically around them as they headed back to the open sea. Those crossing the ice from land were also at risk, as the route consisted of ice floes and open water leads in between. They portaged boats, paddled, and portaged again to reach the 'beached' ship and were at risk of losing the boats and themselves in the water. Thus, the interpretation of *Northland* as in search and rescue mode slots in with the conditions on the ice and the Coast Guard's mission to protect life and property at sea (though the opportunity to protect the Hudson's Bay Company property had passed).

As with Pause III, *Northland's* mobility via its capacity to move through the ice tied tightly to its material form of its ice-breaking capabilities were paramount in its contribution to the Bering Sea Patrol assemblage. The power it surfaced was latent; it had the potential to execute a rescue operation but, in the end, had no call to do so. The *Northland's* presence was included in every account I uncovered that discussed this incident. That *Northland* was watching was clearly noted.

The *Northland* made its twelfth and final Bering Sea Patrol cruise in 1938. On the 20th of September, it 'detached from the Bering Sea Patrol' for the last time. Commander Zeusler's final report listed the following metrics:

'Miles cruised 13,436.1
Hours underway 1,459.25
Vessels boarded 39
Vessels assisted 3
Lives saved none
Number of persons afforded transportation: Natives 134, whites 49
Number and value of rations furnished natives and destitute seamen 273 = 273 $187.80
Number of cases of dental relief: Natives 711, whites 40
Number of cases of medical relief: Natives 863, whites 15
Total value, dental and medical supplies furnished Natives $125.02, whites $25.86.
Number of conferences with native councils on matter pertaining to their welfare - 15
Number of notarial cases – 14'

- Zeusler, 1938, p. 1.

-

These metrics and the daily entries in the ship's logbooks, however accurate, surface only a partial story. The left-hand pages record important data about meteorological conditions, course headings, geographical position and the drills and routines completed or dispensed with. But the Beaufort scale '7' hardly conveys the discomfort of the oceanographer Morton, who wrote in his journal on June 28, 1938 that the ship motion was so bad, 'I heaved my insides clear up to my anus' (Morton, 1937, p. 31). Even the 'Events of the day' entries on the right-hand page often only give hints as to the story behind a terse phrase, such as 'sighted *Baychimo*,' took still and moving pictures of Bogoslof, 'loaded walrus shot by ship's personnel,' or 'Medical, dental and census parties ashore.' Events also took place onboard and onshore, which are not recorded at all in the logbooks. Ellie and Pillowak's wedding was not recorded in the ship's log entries for September of 1937, only Rainey's memoire provides that information. And the logbooks never mention the presence of a cat, though according to Rainey, the crew had adopted a wild kitten that made its home in the wheelhouse. Nor are there entries for certain onshore excursions that would likely have met with official disapproval. When transporting a Smithsonian archaeological crew to St. Lawrence Island, the captain led a few select people on his own dig. Andrew Morton gave a macabre account of this venture in his journal:

'The Captain was not interested in the excavations but led us to another spot where he wanted us to dig. The first shovelful brought a human skeleton to view. It looked queer to see the ribs, vertebrae etc. being turned up with a spade. Now the whole party got down and started to dig and sift the dirt through fingers in order to find the old trinkets. We were uncovering all sorts of things such as beads, wooden dishes, carved animals, etc. Every once in a while another skeleton

would come into view and all of us would dig feverishly for the skull. I got two skulls, one for myself and one for the dentist. We were really a bunch of graverobbers'.

- Morton, 1937, pp. 89-90.

Of course, the shadows of *Northland's* sea tracks are discernable in the ship's logbooks and they do tell us important information about the ship's routes in every cruise year: ice conditions, official duties carried out, villages visited, mail transported, passenger arrivals and departures, medical and dental services rendered, etc. In effect, the reach of the Bering Sea Patrol is reflected in these ship's journals. And the extension of that reach into nontraditional functions in 1937 and 1938, under Commander Zeusler, the ship was also used for the first time as an oceanographic sampling platform, and the geographic position and timing of the sample stations are duly recorded in the logbooks. I argue that the 1938 cruise, and the ones that came before it, can be understood as multiple simultaneous cruises that took place on a single ship-space contained within the Bering Sea Patrol assemblage. There was the fish and game enforcement cruise described in the annual governor's report:

'The patrol of the waters of the North Pacific Ocean, Bering Sea and southeast Alaska, which was in progress at the close of the fiscal year 1933, was being conducted by the Coast Guard cutters Tallapoosa, Northland, Shoshone, Itasca, Haida and the 125-foot patrol boats Alert and Montgomery. This patrol which is carried on annually by the Coast Guard has for its primary purpose the enforcement of the convention of July 7, 1911, between the United States, Great Britain, Russia, and Japan, and the laws and regulations for the protection of the fur seal and sea otter; and of the game, fisheries and fur-bearing animals of Alaska'.

- Governor's Report, 1933, p. 30.

This was an extremely limited description of the patrol's functions. Certainly, the patrol included the core Coast Guard duties of protecting life and property at sea was a part of *Northland's* official cruise duties, as was delivering and receiving mail, cargo and people to and from every port on its Bering Sea and Arctic Ocean route. Then there were also the US Public Health Service's Medical and Dental services contemporaneous cruise, during which the medical and dental officers provided care both on and off the ship in every village during every *Northland* Bering Sea Patrol cruise year. In the latter years of the cruise, *Northland* was said to have such a modern, well-equipped dental surgery that Zeusler noted if the ship was to be taken out of service, the equipment ought to be transferred to another ship. The Oceanographic cruise was staffed by two young students from the University of

Washington and was supervised by Zeusler, who had undertaken studies at Woods Hole Oceanographic Laboratory. He had begun the scientific data collection in 1934 when he was commander of Chelan (another of the Bering Sea Patrol vessels), and resumed the work in 1937 and 1938 from *Northland,* leveraging its capabilities to further the scientific investigations of sea temperature, sea floor composition, etc. The annual portage of the entire village of King Island to Nome in early summer and back in early autumn was an annual round-trip ferry operation, transporting around 250 islanders to their summer camp along with all their personal belongings and the ivory and crafts they intended to sell.

And there were the unusual tasks performed and noted in the logbooks. 'Just before we crossed the Arctic Circle this morning there was a burial at sea for the ashes of an old Nova Scotia sea captain. The "Northland' gave quite a lurch as we crossed the circle. It must have scraped against the circle as it passed' (Morton, 1937, p. 53). 'On 1 August 1937, the ashes of Captain O.C. Parrott of Nova Scotia were scattered [in Bering Strait] in accordance with request by Bellingham, Washington' (Ship's Log, 1 August 1937). On another occasion, 'Northland's crew …was called on to make a special trip to Nunivak to exhume the body [of a murder victim] and carry it to Nome in a canvas for the trial' (Miller, 1936, pp. 217-18).

Northland's materiality as expressed in its ice-breaker form was the paramount affordance it contributed to the Bering Sea Patrol, underpinning mobility in the Bering Sea and Arctic and permitting the cruises to take place, albeit only seasonally. The ship's material malleability afforded a correction to its unfortunate sea handling characteristics. Once the anachronistic sailing rig was eliminated, the masts cut down and the ballast increased and shifted from fore to aft, ship motion was dampened such that Zeusler commented, 'The vessel has punched the heaviest of seas and still kept dry and stable' (Zeusler, 1938, p. 27).

Dry and stable, but not always able to push forward on the route as scheduled. Weather and ice conditions proved a limiting factor even for the modern icebreaker *Northland*. The seven days circling St. Lawrence Island during the inaugural cruise is one dramatic example, but there are many instances recorded in the logbooks during the twelve years of patrol of waiting out the ice, taking shelter in anchorages

and being blocked from ports entirely. '…the ocean must be engaged as a material space characterized by movement and continual reformation across all of its dimensions' (Steinberg, 2013, p. 156). The *Northland's* role in exerting federal power over Territorial Alaska's coastal and island communities was blunted by the opposing material maritime conditions it encountered at times.

It was through repetition and practice enabled by ship affordances that *Northland* and its executive officers accrued the breadth and intensity of recognition that transformed *Northland* from a mere ship into a 'floating government,' as it was often characterized. The contribution of *Northland* to the authority exercised by the Bering Sea Patrol assemblage was thus highly significant. It was a 'government' that extended its authority beyond Coast Guard competencies into village inspections ('the 'census') and mediating legalities and customs of marriage between 'white man's law' and indigenous practices. Recognition was amassed both via the twelve years *Northland* spent on patrol in Alaska, and by following in the wake of earlier sea tracks left by predecessors, especially USCG Cutter *Bear.*

Repetition of practices of village inspections, dental and medical treatment, consultations and actions by the executive officer in his role as US Commissioner, search and rescue operations all coalesced to accrue authority over Bering Sea communities, as evidenced by Pause II (Ellie and Pillowak's Marriage) and Pause III (Counting Alaska Natives). Said Zeusler in his final report, '…they feel we represent the law and though it is explained continuously to the natives, they believe that we have much greater power than we really possess. I was greatly pleased with the reception that I received when I spoke with the mayors and their councils in the many villages visited. The Coast Guard is so firmly entrenched in the minds of these people that their desire is to see us real masters, the real law enforcement agencies ashore and for us to have the authority to enforce the mandates in regard to health, sanitation, education, recreations, etc.' (Zeusler, 1938, p. 4).

The contrasting evidence from Bogoslof (Pause I) and *Baychimo* (Pause IV) suggests that governance is constrained when the subject itself is unexpectedly mobile. Governance of Bogoslof Island via survey and surveillance was futile in the face of a phenomenon that continuously blurred the distinction between land and sea. How

can you plot a precise geographical position on the ocean, when the subterranean volcano beneath exhibits its own vibrant materiality, forms and deforms above and below the sea line, and refuses to stay dormant? In the case of *Baychimo*, *Northland's* only apparent option was to be a witness, where the ice and weather conditions which entrapped *Baychimo* and lodged her in ice was equally a countervailing force in its salvage. *Baychimo* was termed a ghost ship for its capacity to appear and disappear, not really on its own, but in conjunction with its frigid 'ice-dock.'

At the end of the 1938 cruise year, *Northland* was to be transferred to the Maritime Service for use as a barracks and training ship at Alameda (Johnson, 1987, p. 169). It would eventually become a barracks and training ship, but for the Israeli Navy, not the US Maritime Service. The biographical episode in between concerned its service in the North Atlantic during WWII and is not included in this study. The next empirical chapter concerns its service as a clandestine immigration vessel in post-war Europe.

CHAPTER 5: PALESTINE

Two Versions of Northland

High Road Ship

Figure 41a. USCG Cutter *Northland* c. 1934.
Source: United States Coast Guard Historian's Office, Washington, D.C.

Low Road Ship

Figure 40b. *Northland/Medinat ha'Yehudim* c. October 1947 in Haifa.
Source: Hagana Archives, Tel Aviv.

INTRODUCTION

In September of 1947, *Northland* embarked nearly 3,000 Jewish passengers from the Black Sea port of Burgas in Bulgaria and set course for Palestine, intending to pierce the British blockade of Mandate Palestine, beach the ship and deliver the immigrants to waiting kibbutz communities. This operational use was in stark contrast to the previous chapter's examination of its service as a 'floating government' in Territorial Alaska. Whereas the icebreaker was used in Alaska to extend 'power over' the remote territory, in this biographical episode the ship was turned into material used contest state authority, that is 'power to,' on behalf of the post-war Zionist project known as 'Aliyah Bet'.[48]

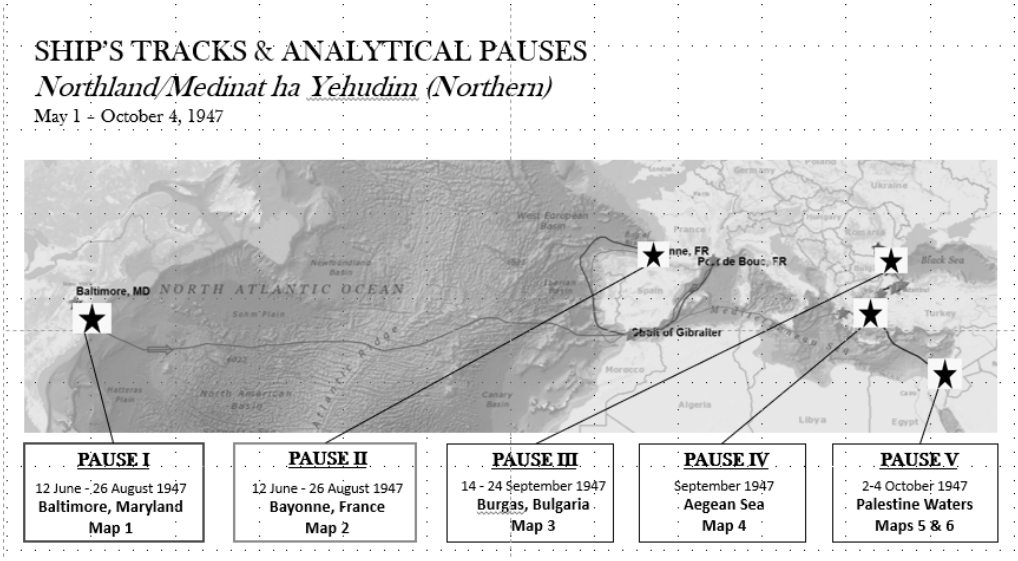


Figure 42. Palestine Analytical Pause Map Key.
Source: Author. Created 2017.

In post-war Europe, this assemblage was entangled in complex power geometries that operated at multiple levels, in multiple geographies, on land and at sea. This chapter examines empirical evidence from five analytical pauses to illuminate the contribution made by *Northland* to the assemblage: (I) Acquisition in Baltimore, (II) Adaptations in Bayonne, (III) Embarkation in Burgas, (IV) Crossing the Mediterranean and (V) Interception near Palestine. These distinct pauses provide evidence for diverse modes of participation. And, although this is not explicitly a comparative study, the stark contrast between government and insurgent service in a single ship's history illuminates not only ways in which ship design, materiality and ship-spaces can participate in very different distributed assemblages, but how aspects of original ship design can be redirected toward unanticipated, unexpected and surprising purposes.

New owners, New Operational Purpose

Northland's new owner, the Weston Trading Company, was a shell company that acquired ships for Mossad le Aliyah Bet (Mossad), a dedicated semi-autonomous branch of the underground Zionist military organization Hagana.[49] Mossad was

founded to coordinate clandestine immigration to Palestine, what historian Mordechai Naor characterizes as the third and most successful of the four channels of the struggle to establish a Jewish state in Palestine: the migration of tens of thousands of Jewish survivors from Europe to Palestine in the aftermath of WWII (Naor, 2016, Interview). Mossad acquired, crewed, adapted and sailed this ship, among others, into an ongoing conflict which directly challenged British authority to restrict Jewish immigration to Palestine in 1947 under the 1939 White Paper,[50] the year prominent Israeli historian Matti Golani describes as, 'the most important and interesting year in post-War European history' (Golani, 2016, Interview).

The war was over, the Cold War was emergent, alliances were reconfiguring, the British Empire was collapsing and the question of control of Palestine was coming to a head with the report from the Anglo-American Inquiry and the impending United Nations debate on the partition of Palestine. In his text 'Palestine Between Politics & Terror', Golani presents a balanced perspective on policy and events drawn from the experience of General Sir Alan Cunningham, the last High Commissioner of Palestine under the Mandate. His assessment concludes that British policy was an expression of pragmatic self-interest, and not was anti-Semitic (Golani, 2013, Interview). Numerous texts and articles on clandestine immigration have been written by participants and contain a range of mostly negative views of British authorities and actions based on personal experiences. Journalist James Barr's book 'A Line in the Sand' reaches back to the early 20th century to trace the struggle for domination over the Middle East between Britain and France (Barr, 2011). Tom Segev's book 'One Palestine Complete' similarly exposes the complexity of the struggle, exposing tensions within organizations, between allied groups as well as oppositional actors (Segev, 2011).

Taken in aggregate, these works describe a locale where competing interests fought not only over territory but over fundamentally incompatible competing futures. Compromise was rendered unattainable. The British were determined to maintain a controlling presence in the Middle East, by way of extending the duration of the British-Mandate over Palestine, which provided both a Mediterranean base and a land route to India. Palestinian Arabs feared the realization of the Balfour

[50] 1939 British-Mandate White Paper (May 17, 1939).

Declaration that virtually guaranteed a Jewish majority, if not a Jewish independent state. Jewish Zionists were determined to build a majority population and establish a Jewish state, a 'renascent' nation.[51] The geopolitics of the post-war world extended the contest beyond those actors to a wider field; as wartime alliances receded, legacy tensions reemerged. What was to be termed 'The Cold War' was discernible by 1947 and the 'Iron Curtain'[52] descended on Eastern Europe.

The crux of conflict over Jewish immigration to Palestine took place at sea, with the British eventually establishing a naval blockade of the Palestine coast and the Mossad repeatedly attempting to 'run it' with ships acquired from Greece, Italy, Turkey and the United States. Although it is impossible to know exact numbers, scholars estimate that between 1945 and 1948, 250,000 to 330,000 Jews passed through the Displaced Persons (DP) camps in the American and British zones of occupied Germany' (Stone, 2015, p. 19). Some returned home, but many saw no future there and looked to Palestine to rebuild their lives. Naor notes that most European Jews had not been Zionists before the war, it was only in the aftermath, when family, friends, neighborhoods and property had disappeared that Palestine became a destination for a majority of European Jews (Naor, 1987). This movement set up what one observer describes as 'a vicious circle', in which the more refugees arrive in the west, the greater the activity of Zionists in organizing illegal immigration. If the refugees were not successful in getting to Palestine, they amassed in the DP camps and built pressure to release them in which case they sought to emigrate (Liebreich, 2012, p. 1).

Hundreds of thousands of Jewish Displaced Persons (DPs) were, like the territory of Palestine, trapped in the post-war tension in which 'The international politics of dealing with refugees were forged' (Stone, 2015, p. 3). Mossad organizer Ehud Avriel recalled, 'As ever-new death camps were discovered by the advancing Allied armies, the flow of refugees grew. People tried to get away from the scene of the slaughter and headed towards the sea, where they hoped to find boats to take them to Palestine' (Avriel, 1975, p. 197). The war was over. Pressure to 'open the gates'

[51] According to the Palestine Year- book these are "to support the aims of the Hebrew Committee of National Liberation, which seeks: —To obtain recognition for the Hebrew people of Europe and Palestine as a renascent nation' (G 224/307/47).

continued to intensify. Zionist organizers declared 'The period of 'fighting Hitler as if there were no White Paper and fighting the White Paper as if there was no war against Hitler' had come to an end. We now faced one single enemy: His Majesty's Government' (Avriel, 1975, p. 221).

Official British government policy was to divide immigration to Palestine and the issue of DPs into two separate, unrelated concerns. The 1939 White Paper quota restricted legal immigration of Jews to Palestine to 75,000 over a period of five years, with further immigration subject to Arab agreement. The policy was enforced until the day British personnel and equipment evacuated from Haifa Harbor on 14 May 1948. 'HM Government are determined to check illegal immigration and further preventative measures are being adopted. The numbers of Jewish illegal immigrants, who despite these measures, may succeed in coming into the country and cannot be deported will be deducted from the yearly quota' (White Paper, 1939). Immigration certificates granted to Jews of the Reich before the war were annulled.

Although the conflict was most publicly played out on the seas near Palestine territorial waters, the preventative measures the British government used included legal and diplomatic tools, intelligence and surveillance programs and military force. In an article analyzing British intelligence operations against Jewish immigration, Steven Wagner discusses the relationship of the unauthorized immigration project alongside the secret paramilitary struggle waged on land: The 'Principal strategy was to make it financially, politically and personally so costly as to dissuade other countries from assisting and individuals from participating' (Wagner, 2014, p. 709).

From the Zionist's perspective, the prospect of a Jewish homeland in Palestine laid out in the Balfour Declaration was fundamentally undermined by the White Paper of 1939. In the build up to and during the first years of the war, Germany's Reich encouraged Jews to emigrate to Palestine, negotiating with figures such as Berthed Storfer in Roumania to expel Jews from the Reich. Often for a price (Ofer, 1990). Britain perceived Germany's purpose was to subvert British interests in the region and despite the demand for entry to Palestine, it held fast to the White Paper quota. 'During the war, they ascribed the flow of refugees to Zionist efforts and not to the panic due to Nazi policies and actions' (Ofer, 1990, p. 163). Despite differences within and between groups, Palestinian Jewish leaders were united only on the

desirability of bringing as many refugees to Palestine. They were divided on tactics and to what degree they should cooperate with the British Palestine Mandate authorities. However, after the war the escalating force of British opposition to unauthorized immigration cemented immigration into a unifying moral imperative and a territorializing strategy for the Zionists. Mossad organizer Dani Schind saw it this way, 'Most of the Jews have died, and most of the anti-Semites are alive' (Avriel, 1975, p. 199).

What both British and Zionist held in common was the comprehension that immigration was a Palestine-futures Rubicon - and the ships of the Mossad were the vessels that enabled thousands of Jews to cross it. Britain attempted to thwart the acquisition of ships by pressuring governments to forbid the sale of ships suspected for use in immigration to Palestine. When the Zionists acquired a ship, Britain used diplomatic pressure on Turkey, Panama and Honduras to withdraw registration from vessels that, if sailed without a flag, would be subject to legal commandeering on the high seas.

If a ship maintained its flag, British representatives attempted to use law of the sea conventions on Safety and Sanitation to prevent its passage through spaces of maritime exception. And when that failed and a ship neared the coast of Palestine, the Royal Navy forcibly intercepted and captured the vessel, passengers and crew. Fritz Liebreich documents tensions within the British government towards the exercise of the Mandate, maintenance of the quota restrictions and methods and intensity with which force ought to be used to suppress Jewish immigration (Liebreich, 2012). Ninian Stewart's history of the Royal Navy Palestine Patrol focuses on four ships: *Athina*, *Exodus 1947*, *Pan Crescent* and *Pan York* (Stewart, 2002). The *Northland* is rarely cited, except for the odd paragraph or appearance in lists of the ships.

The British implemented a policy of *refoulement* during the infamous incident of President Warfield/*Exodus 1947.* This ship was intercepted in International Waters, badly damaged by ramming, towed to Haifa, burned and sunk. Its passengers were returned to Marseille on prison ships, the port from which the DPs originally embarked. There, they refused to disembark voluntarily, and the French government rejected the use of force. In frustration, the Royal Navy was ordered to sail to Hamburg and forcibly removed passengers and intern them in former

concentration camps. Although there had been earlier catastrophic encounters, this one was a worldwide public relations disaster for the British, described by Avriel as a 'pyrrhic victory' (Avriel, 1975, p. 330).

The British Government was determined to prevent and divert the departure and progress of 'illegal Jewish immigrant ships'.[53] Mossad was equally committed to increasing their number. Each new British tactic resulted in a countermove by Mossad. When Marseille became 'too hot', due to Foreign Office diplomatic maneuvers and MI5 activity, they moved port operations to Bayonne on the Atlantic Coast, where *Northland* and *Paducah* were refitted into passenger ships. When the British Foreign Office succeeded in blocking embarkations from France, Italy and Greece, Mossad moved operations to Black Sea Ports where Britain had little influence over countries that had been ceded to USSR control and no freedom of movement for its naval ships.

'As disciplinary power in space becomes more totalizing, it also becomes more available for subversion…the most totalizing sites of oppression can be sites of liberation' (Certeau cited in Dovey, 1999, p. 131). This idea applies not only to ship-spaces, but also to the seas. Mossad realized that the ships were useful not just as transportation, but as highly evocative stages that provided a still-attentive world audience with a view on what appeared to be an asymmetrical war between the British Royal Navy and overcrowded ships filled with desperate refugees. David and Goliath and Goliath, the British Government, nearly always won the skirmish. Although each step in the advance of a ship from identification to survey, to purchase, to refit, to sail, to embarkation and to Palestine was undertaken in secrecy, all but one of the ships Mossad launched after the war were intercepted by the Royal Navy and its passengers (mostly) deported to Cyprus detention camps.

The linkages between actions at sea on land became ever tighter. After a major crackdown on Jewish organizations by the British Mandate Authority on what was known as 'Black Sabath' (29 June 1946), Hagana Commander Ben Gurion, 'At a council of war…demanded more departures from more ports and in larger boats. He

[53] Other labels included 'refugee-runner,' 'blockade-runner,' 'people smuggler,' 'illegal, and' 'illegal immigration ship'.

asked for stiff resistance against British boarding-parties once the boats were - inevitably - caught. We are on our way to statehood' (Ariel, 1975, 309).

'The built environment', says Lefevre, 'is a primary medium for the techniques of establishing, legitimizing, and reproducing ideology at every scale from the house to the city' (Lefevre cited in Dovey, 1999, p. 45). The *Northland*, one of the last of four ships purchased from the United States to run the British blockade, was intended not only to transport Jewish immigrants to Palestine, but also to legitimize the prospect of a Jewish state in what Zionists referred to as 'Eretz Israel'.

Pauses, Drawings and Models

This chapter's account of *Northland's* participation in unauthorized immigration establishes the centrality of ship materiality, ship-spaces and agency in the *power to* determine post-war Palestine futures as contested at sea, in the liminal spaces of territorial waters, ports and docks and on land. In the juxtaposition of solidity of structure and mutability through adaptation and mission, the role of the ship can be traced through a progression of acquisition, adaptation, embarkation, advancing and interception.

The following five sections of this chapter are organized around the aforementioned five pauses that occurred between January and October 1947. Each pause centers on an event and works outwards and backwards (as described in the Methodology chapter) to determine the contribution to the assemblage by *Northland*; how its thing-power was an element in the assemblage of unauthorized Jewish immigration to Palestine.

In keeping with the clandestine nature of its mission, records of *Northland*'s movements under Hagana ownership do not follow typical ships logs containing copious recorded precise positions and daily records of events. Instead, its sea tracks are discernible primarily using a Hagana/Mossad communication log, date and location data from Royal Navy surveillance records, press accounts, interviews, and crew and passenger memoirs. In many cases, this data is not in complete agreement, and but events have been verified as to sequential order. Rather than precise ship's tracks, then, movements and events during the period from 3 January to 4 October 1947 are plotted on the Pause Maps as data points and the routes in

between reflect typical routing, across the Atlantic for example, but cannot represent the ship's exact sea tracks.

The essential material structure of *Northland* stayed constant, but the transformations, subtractions and additions made by the Mossad to enable Jewish immigration are foundational to *Northland's* participation in the assemblage of *power to* enable Jewish immigration. Its 'thing-ness' was mutable. To trace these changes, I created new drawings of the ship blueprints using previous drawings, photographs and textural sources to identify and re-imagine the configuration of the ship during this phase of its biography. Certain pauses warranted model-making explorations to better understand the meaning of such moments, and I describe how and why each model is used.

PALESTINE PAUSE I: ACQUISITION IN BALTIMORE

Figure 43. Palestine Pause Map 1: Baltimore, January 3, 1947.
Source: Author. Created 2017.

This first pause centers on the sale of *Northland* by the US government to the Weston Trading Company of New York, a shell (or 'dummy') company that surveyed and purchased the ship on behalf of Mossad. Following naval service in the North Atlantic throughout WWII, the ship's overall condition had deteriorated. The preconditions to making the ship operational as an immigration vessel included repairs, legal compliance, with maritime law, sourcing officers and crew, purchasing and loading fuel, water and supplies. Whereas to government property assessors, it was essentially scrap, to the Mossad its value was latent and embodied in an intact ship to be reincarnated as a passenger vessel making space and making way, both literally and imaginatively, for the creation of a Jewish state.

SALES PREPARATION

To the US government, the 1946 version of the USCG Cutter *Northland* was an underpowered, technologically obsolete, war-wearied ship; unsuitable for further naval deployment, valuable only for the cash it could contribute to government

coffers. To prepare it for sale required a number of subtractions. First, it was decommissioned, an administrative procedure that removed it from the US military fleet inventory. That reclassification triggered a cascade of changes, some material and some regulatory. The change carried consequences for ship mobilities under the existing maritime regime. For example, where the ship was permitted to venture and a new owner (assuming it wasn't destined to be scrapped) would be required to register it with the US or another country, fly its flag and follow the laws and regulations of that state as well as broader maritime agreements to which the state was a signatory.

As for the material ship, the Commission's naval dry dock was the scene of extensive material *subtractions*. Whereas prior haul-outs had enhanced ship capabilities, this effort stripped them back, removed all government assets and eliminated indicators of its former official status as a naval vessel. The *Northland* was stripped of defense installations including armament, survey and communications equipment and the aircraft hoist. Then the whole-ship angular blue and white arctic iceberg-inspired camouflage was painted over with plain gray primer on the hull and white primer on the superstructure; pentimento layered over steel not painter's canvas.

Figure 44. USS *Northland* 1944 WPG-49 Configuration.
Source: United States Coast Guard Historian's Office, Washington, D.C.

Photographic evidence suggests that little or no attempt was made to blast away the rust that had developed above the water line, mend the cracks which developed in the steel hull, nor smooth the scrapes and gouges from encounters with ice and the occasional grounding damage amassed during wartime service. The reduction of the ship to infrastructure and basic mechanical equipment left what Deleuze and Guattari termed the 'nomadism of matter' to continue unchecked.

The warship designation USS *Northland* WPG-49 was eliminated from the bow and hull, and the coast guard designation 'USCG' was removed from life-saving equipment and everywhere it had been painted, carved or engraved. Crew quarter changes and alterations were made to meet commercial regulations. Ready for sale, docked and stripped back to structure, *Northland* was a rusted, battered version of the pristine ship launched in 1926 from the Newport News Shipbuilding cradle, ready for a new incarnation.

Of the 110 US naval ships that were decommissioned in 1946, 61 were scrapped or sold for scrap. When the US Maritime Commission put *Northland* up for sale it expected it would be one of the scrapped as part of what Crang, Hughes, Gregson, Norris and Ahamed refer to as 'End-of-life networks in which elderly or damaged ships are deconstructed to recover the value of their constituent value' (Crang *et al*., 2013, p. 20). It was advertised for sale on 25 November 1946 by the U.S. Maritime Commission (USMC) through the Contract Settlement and Surplus Materials Division, one of 517 vessels to be disposed of that year.[54] Within the USMC inventory, *Northland* ought to have been unremarkable, but a sales notice in the *New York Times* recalled its 'heroic' wartime service: 'The steel cutter *Northland* is the hardy battler of storm and ice that pursued an armed German trawler for seventy miles through twisting channels [of ice] above the Arctic Circle' (*New York Times*, 4 June 1947, p. 55).

Despite such accolades, with just the core structure and basic physical plant left in place, the medaled *Northland* was no longer a valiant naval vessel, but a 'low road building', albeit a mobile one. On land, these are the buildings located on peripheries; warehouses, factory shells and the like that are claimed, configured and

[54] The division was established on January 4, 1945 by an act of Congress anticipating a glut of post-war surplus material valued at around $310,000,000 (US Maritime Commission Report, 1946).

reconfigured by creative or entrepreneurial energy. ‘Such buildings’, says Stuart Brand, 'keep being valuable precisely because they are disposable' (Brand, 1994, p. 28). Although Brand refers to terrestrial buildings, the concept of ‘low road buildings’ applies equally to floating structures, as evident in Kimberley Peters’ PhD project which investigates how four marginal ships were repurposed to become floating off-shore pirate radio stations known as ’Radio Caroline’ (Peters, 2010). The ships in the small ship auction were equally structures that were open to creative possibilities.

Low Road buildings are attractive to subalterns not only for reasons of cost, but also for freedoms inherent in the invisibility of such structures. As Brand reminds us, ’Adaptation is easiest in cheap buildings that no one cares about’ (Brand, 1994, p. 11). Actually, it is inaccurate to say that *no one* cares about them, though the capacity to envision new purpose is often a subaltern quality. ’Old ideas’, suggests Jane Jacobs, ‘can sometimes use new buildings. New ideas must come from old buildings' (Jacobs, 2006, p. 245).

PURCHASE

Mossad agents identified *Northland* as a vessel with potential, ‘Now that Dani [Schind] was able to buy relatively new vessels in America, compared with the junk available on the European market’ (Ariel, 293). The size and condition of the ship were in scope for this purpose, despite its slow and heavy icebreaker qualities that would be of little apparent use in Mossad’s Mediterranean operations. It was the adaptive potential of *Northland* that motivated Mossad to spend US$50,000 to purchase it on 3 January 1947. The opportunity to acquire and alter this ship’s course quietly and secretively and extensively reconfigure its ship-spaces into a ‘crude passenger ship’ could only have been realized when from one angle it was assessed as disposable surplus and another as endowed with adamantine potential. Its acquisition via an obfuscating entity was the first instance in which *Northland* became a party to contesting the authority of a governing state through covert tactics and misdirection.

Its purchase through an American corporate entity was essential as few foreign acquisitions were being approved. Of the 307 applications for 712 vessels, 63 were for American flag and 649 for foreign flag operations: 'It was anticipated that most American applications would be approved. Of the foreign applications it appeared that only a small portion would receive approval' (USMC, 1947, p. 7). The US was disinclined to transfer ownership of even low-value vessels to former enemy states. Even operating using an American front company, the purchase of *Northland* barely escaped a British-backed March 1947 embargo on the sale and shipment to the middle east of any US equipment - including ships - that could be used for military purposes.

Yehoshua Baharav, commander of the Hagana in 1946, greeted the acquisition of *Northland* and the *Paducah*[55] with genuine excitement, comparing them to previous purchases. 'Suddenly we see…wonderful things; ships that were purchased in America and they are of a different league altogether. They are in ship-shape condition with engines that run, hulls that are whole and do not leak' (Sela, 1990, p. 15). To the organizers of Mossad, these were large ships, capable of carrying thousands of people, despite being designed for far fewer. Divisions between big and small, as Jacobs notes, are relational effects (Jacobs, 2006, p. 21). The Mossad agent, William Ash, who surveyed the ship and executed the purchase on behalf of Weston also assessed the ship's value approvingly, though in more technical nautical terms.

From the moment of procurement, the materiality and ship-spaces of *Northland* were integrated into Mossad's wider Aliyah Bet assemblage comprised of money, ships, people, paper and seas through which it directly confronted British authority in Palestine. This was an operational use that entirely inverted the ship's former incarnations as a floating government and a naval warship. In Alaska, USCG Cutter *Northland* was intentionally and consistently made visible as an embodiment and container of federal state power. In the Mossad project, it was to be sub rosa via multiple strategies of distraction, redirection, and subterfuge. The metamorphosis of the respective identities of ship, crew, and passengers were essential maneuvers in fulfilling Mossad's mission of unauthorized immigration.

[55] *Paducah was another former US Coast Guard vessel purchased by Weston/Mossad for Aliyah Bet.*

The aforementioned *New York Times*' article continued, 'The cutter…whose history has been an open book marked by valiant service…suddenly became a mystery ship yesterday. As completely as though one of the Nazi shells or torpedoes she dodged in her North Atlantic patrols had found a vital spot, the vessel has dropped from sight and all efforts to ascertain her whereabouts and future destiny have been unavailing' (*New York Times*, 4 June 1947, p. 55). In fact, the newspaper was aware that Weston had also purchased *President Warfield* and delivered it to France. However, efforts by the newspaper to determine who was behind the company were unsuccessful. A spokesperson for the company would only explain that both ships would be used 'in the fruit business'. With over 300 agents[56] spread across Europe and the US, British Intelligence was almost certainly already aware that Weston was a front for Mossad.

MOSSAD OPERATIONS

According to one participant, Ze'ev Hardari, 'absolute secrecy surrounded the work of Mossad Le'Aliyah Bet. No protocols of meetings were written, for fear of a leak' (Hadari, 1991, p. 32). Information regarding individuals and decision-making within the organization is available mainly through published memoirs and historical accounts that describe the activities of the Mossad[57]. Recruited by Shaul Avigur, head of Mossad Le-Aliya Bet, Hagana member Danny Schind moved from Kibbutz Ayelet Ha'Shachar to direct the US Mossad operation from his residence at Hotel 14 (AKA Hotel Fourteen) in New York City.

Schind '… didn't know beans about boats' according to one observer (Wandres, 2010, p. 11). For that expertise, they recruited American Captain William Ash, a professional mariner of Eastern European Jewish heritage and an official in the Masters, Mates and Pilots Association. His role was to identify and inspect prospective vessels and act as purchasing agent for the Weston/Mossad. Joe and Pearl Boxenbaum set up the legal 'paper' companies, including Weston, used to

[56] Some estimates put the number of agents as high as 500.

[57] See Ze'ev Venia Hadari's account in *Second Exodus* (1991); Hadari and Ze'ev Tsahor's *Voyage to Freedom* (1985); William R. Perl's *Operation Action* (1983); Dalia Offer's *Escaping the Holocaust* (1990); Ruth Aliav and Peggy Mann's *The Last Escape* (1973).

purchase American vessels. Pearl, an attorney, 'supplied the legal form for Dani's illegal schemes' (Avriel, 1975, p. 299).

All told, the organization purchased ten American ships for Aliyah Bet, purchased by different shell companies to make the connections more difficult to trace. Funds were raised for their purchase primarily through American fund-raising drives. When *Northland* was acquired, the Nautical Shipping and Servicing Company was in the process of taking over Weston and later morphed once again into the F&B Shipping Company.[58] After a ship purchase, each company dissolved to avoid being held accountable for legal or financial sanctions. Altogether, Dani Schind's residence at Hotel 14 was, according to Ehud Avriel, '…a beehive of Haganah emissaries and ardent American volunteers' (Avriel, 1975, p. 261). 'It was not a matter of conspiracy. Everything was done legally in America, and American dollars made it legal in Europe' (Ben-tzur, 2015, online). Everything was done legally, and yet with stealth and misdirection.

The *Northland, Paducah and President Warfield* were not the only 'banana boats' acquired for unauthorized immigration. In the years leading up to the war, and during the conflict, numerous ships and boats were used to flee the violence but a comprehensive count of vessels and passengers will never be made. In the post-war period, thirty-six boats and ships were engaged in unauthorized Jewish immigration to Palestine. One ship, the *Abril*, was purchased and operated by the American League for a Free Palestine, a competing underground organization associated with the Irgun (also known as the 'Stern Gang'). The twenty-four non-American ships and boats were purchased or leased in Greece, Italy, Turkey and France. What distinguished the American ships were their relatively superior condition, as noted by Baharav, and their potential to carry relatively large numbers of people. Purchasing was only a first step, though, other conditions had to be met in order to take them to sea.

[58] *Purportedly 'F' stood for 'Fuck' and 'B' for 'British.'*

In Order to Sail

The purchase of *Northland* was one component of a complex and clandestine operation that spanned North America, France, Romania, Bulgaria and Palestine and climaxed on high and territorial seas. To deploy its purchase into the operation, the Mossad had to reincarnate it into a ship capable of going to sea and carrying thousands of passengers. Extracting the ship from this liminal state meant conforming to legal requirements, both local and international, recruiting officers and crew to operate the vessel, and loading fuel, water and supplies onboard. Whereas Schind, Ash, and the Boxenbaums coordinated the business of secretive acquisition of the ships, once in the possession of Mossad others would operationalize them. The effort to keep the operation cloaked in secrecy also continued as the ship was readied for operational use.

Paradoxically, to deploy ships for unauthorized immigration, it was essential for Mossad to comply with maritime and local law regarding seaworthiness, safety, sanitations, personnel, transit papers and visas. The objective was to be scrupulously compliant while attempting to avoid detection by British intelligence agents. This juxtaposition is a recurring phenomenon throughout this episode in the ship's biography. The visible and the covert, seen and unseen, compliant and subversive, legal and illegal are simultaneous phenomena manifested in the *power to* geometries of unauthorized Jewish immigration to Palestine.

Peters notes that, 'The sea is not like the land, or air, legally or materially, and mobilities cannot be controlled and contained in the same ways, therefore as connected spaces' (Peters, 2014, p. 414). Yet, as this study argues in the last chapter, the sea is *not* disconnected from land. Through conventions, treaties and national rule making, ships at sea are governed most loosely in international waters, most closely within territorial limits.

Registration and flagging

> *'Ships shall sail under the flag of one State only and, save in exceptional cases expressly provided for in international treaties or in this Convention, shall be subject to its exclusive*

jurisdiction on the high seas. A ship may not change its flag during a voyage or while in a port of call, sale in the case of a real transfer of ownership or change of registry.'

- UNCLOS, 1947. [59]

Ships that sail without registration under a country flag are, and were, subject to interception and confiscation in international waters. Peters describes how the raid on Pirate Radio Caroline ship the *Mi Amigo* was justified as it was 'believed to be without flag' (Peters, 2006, p. 46). Once registered, a ship must comply with both the flag country's laws and regulations and respect any treaties and conventions to which the country is a signatory. The certificate of registry is, in effect, 'the citizenship papers of a ship', notes John McPhee, 'A ship wholly owned in Kansas City can sail under the flag of the Sultan of Oman' (McPhee, 1990, p. 66).

In this case, a ship owned by an American company on behalf of a clandestine Jewish Zionist organization was registered with Panama and flew the Panamanian flag from Baltimore to Palestine. Acquiring the flag for *Northland* was a matter of connections and funds.[60] Mossad volunteer Ralph Gold recalled in an interview having been given $50,000 cash to deliver to the Panamanian Consulate in NYC '…and I got the flag!' Murray Greenfield recounts that Samuel Zemurray, owner of United Fruit Company, took responsibility for acquiring flags for the Aliyah Bet ships. According to Greenfield, Zemurray included a better price for bananas in exchange for registrations (Greenfield, 2015, Interview).

In the context of Aliyah Bet, registration with a non-American, non-European country was critical. Following the war, maritime governance was in somewhat of a limbo and Britain was attuned to the legality of ship seizure with respect to categories of flag. 'Legally action could only be taken in respect of ships flying ex-enemy flag, I.e. Italy, Hungary, Roumania and Bulgaria, and in those cases only until peace treaties are signed. Ships of Allied or neutral flag could not be intercepted on the high seas' (CO 7602/84). Once the treaties were signed, the importance of preventing ships from departing their ports of origin no longer under British control

[59] United Nations Convention of Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) incorporated earlier conventions and treaties into a single convention in 1947.

[60] Panama, the first country to offer a 'flag of convenience,' was most popular country of registry in the 1940s. In 1922, Panamanian registry, and the concept of a 'flag of convenience' enabled American ships to transport alcohol during prohibition.

was the preferred solution, as it avoided all sorts of complications as well as being financially advantageous.

One tactic Britain used was pressurizing registry governments to withdraw registration from suspect ships, including from *Northland*. It was successful in seven other cases, but overall the pressure on Panama backfired as British government-sponsored publicity toward all Panamanian ships in British controlled ports negatively impacted ship operators who were not engaged in immigration activities, and they in turn complained to the Panamanian Government. For Panama's part, the registry system was a principal revenue source to be protected. Subsequent results disappointed British officials. One Foreign Office document describes the Panamanian authorities as 'consistently uncooperative' (FO E9082). Another describes the Consul [in France] as 'obviously either very lazy or else open to influence' (FO E8644). Mossad retained *Northland's* Panamanian registration.

Decommissioning transformed *Northland* into a civilian ship. Panamanian registration legally and effectively shifted the legal' *Northland s* identity from an American to a Panamanian ship. These two events afforded the ship extensive mobilities accrued to registered non-military vessels. To utilize those freedoms and effect an escape from British influence and immobility, Mossad required a crew, supplies and documents.

'THERE GOES THE JEWISH NAVY'

Paul Shulman was also the primary recruiter for ship personnel. He personally interviewed potential officers and crew in the dingy one-room downtown New York City office that served as Weston's 'HQ'. The passage from Maryland to France was to be sailed under a crew of locally sourced, paid officers (except for the radio officer, who volunteered) and volunteer 'Sailors'. The 'Palestine Vocational Service', the recruiting arm to Weston, worked secretively to source candidates from amongst Sailors with naval experience (mostly, but not all Jewish), though many recruits had no sea experience at all. American youth groups and in some cases, individuals heard about the project and sought a connection to the organization. Either way, contact was made by 'mouth to ear' (Markovitsky, 2007, p. 11).

As with the ship purchases, 'Because of the necessity of secrecy, there is almost no written material about this period at all' (Sela, 1990, Interview). Per maritime law, ships' officers had to be qualified and Panamanian seaman's papers were secured as a part of the registration deal. For this group, the assignment was limited to delivery of the ship to France without further obligation. Volunteers had their own reasons for serving.[61]

Irving Metzler had served as a radio operator in merchant marine convoys during the war, including the hazardous Murmansk crossing to deliver suppliers to the USSR. After the war, he spoke with Jewish concentration camp survivors and learned of their determination to make their way to Palestine. Back in New York, he heard about the Aliyah Bet project and volunteered to be *Northland's* Radio Officer (*AVI Newsletter*, 2006, p. 11). Edward Abadi, 'Eddie', the 23-year-old Bosun, was member of the Zionist youth movement from New Jersey and lacked sea-going experience. As fellow volunteer Eddy Kaplansky noted, 'The crew was mostly volunteers and 'landlubbers' who had never sailed before' and would have to be transformed into sailors' (Ben-tzur, 2015, online). Eddy was a Canadian pilot and qualified air-navigator whose friend Laz Kahansky invited him to join the crew.

Mordy Shell (AKA Manfred Shleznitsky) recalled being recruited in March 1947 'When I was at the Hechalutz Farm in Hightown, NJ. People from the Aliya Bet came around to round up volunteers to work on the illegal ships to bring Jews from Europe to Palestine. In two days, I flew to Baltimore and joined my shipmates I had never met before' (Ben-tzur, 2015, online). The crew converged at Brown's Wharf to prepare the ship for an Atlantic crossing. There was some doubt about its seaworthiness on the part of the recruits. Shell recalled, 'The ship didn't look like an ocean-going vessel, we called it 'our Banana Boat'. She was rusty and in bad shape' (Ben-tzur, 2015, online).

Atlantic Crossing Preparations

[61] See Appendix B for the crew list.

‘For the next week or two we cleaned the ship and took on supplies and foodstuffs for our voyage and future passengers. We also took aboard lumber, used later in Europe to enclose the space above the aft-deck and for the shelves that would be bed and home for our passengers’ (Ben-tzur, 2015, online). These activities echo the duties of Coast Guard and Navy personnel on board *Northland*. A ship must have fuel and water for propulsion; a crew must have food and water to sustain them. The work roster familiarizes personnel with the spaces on board, with the routines of shipboard life, and with one another as members of a crew that must work side-by-side. Mossad set up a 24/7 watch in anticipation of British intelligence activity, knowing that MI5 operated a special unit known as ‘IJI’ (Illegal Jewish Immigration).

One IJI operative interviewed a recruit and reported ‘We were informed by a member of the crew who decided not to sail that the crew was 80% Jewish and of above intelligence for seamen, and that some of them admitted they were trying to go to Palestine as illegal immigrants’ (FO 1052/82). The operator of the launch that took volunteer Lawrence Kolberg out to his ship, noted ‘there’s an awful lot of Jews on that ship’. Despite the emphasis on secrecy, the ship’s purpose became generally known leading some to comment ‘There goes the Jewish Navy’ (Ben-tzur, 2015, online).

Despite common expectation that *Northland’s* destination was Palestine, in keeping with port authority regulations, each ship had to declare a destination to secure departure clearance. The *President Warfield* ostensibly left for China whereas *Northland* declared its destination as Cuba. This misdirection fooled no one but could not be disproved while the ship remained in port. Upon its departure from Brown’s Wharf on 1 May 1947 with 30 officers and crew on board, it set course across the Atlantic on a heading for Europe.

PALESTINE PAUSE I SUMMARY

The acquisition of *Northland* signaled its inceptive integration into the clandestine Aliyah Bet assemblage. Although no significant changes had yet been made to its structure, nor had it left American waters, this pause reveals the ship as transformed via decommissioning, material subtractions and the transfer of ownership to

Mossad. The stripped back materiality of the ship afforded it 'low-road' potential of the kind sought by the Aliyah Bet organizers. Mossad was free to impress upon it an innovatory vision of a Mediterranean icebreaker-hulled passenger ship re-configured to accommodate thousands packed into a structure designed for fewer than 200 persons.

The reincarnated adamantine ship was intended to be invisible to antagonists while simultaneously complying (or appearing to comply) with the regulatory regime of the day. This tension-filled duality was sustained by the affordances provided by the maritime operational context. These affordances enabled the vessel to escape diplomatic and legal maneuvers designed to thwart its mission to transport Jewish immigrants to Palestine. The legal use of an American shell company circumvented restrictions on foreign purchases of surplus ships. The legitimate procurement of a flag of convenience as a civilian vessel via Panamanian registration protected the ship from interdiction on the high seas. Key contacts in the industry verified its seaworthiness and leveraged the informal networks of seafarers to discreetly recruit officers and crew to sail it. In this moment, *Northland's* embodied power was primarily preparatory and latent, but its purchase and preparation activities wove the vessel irrevocably into the Aliyah Bet assemblage amidst strands of legality and illegality, visibility and obfuscation, materiality and imagination. The Panamanian ship that was to depart Maryland was a clandestine Mossad ship which was directed to contest state power.

PALESTINE PAUSE II: ADAPTATIONS IN BAYONNE

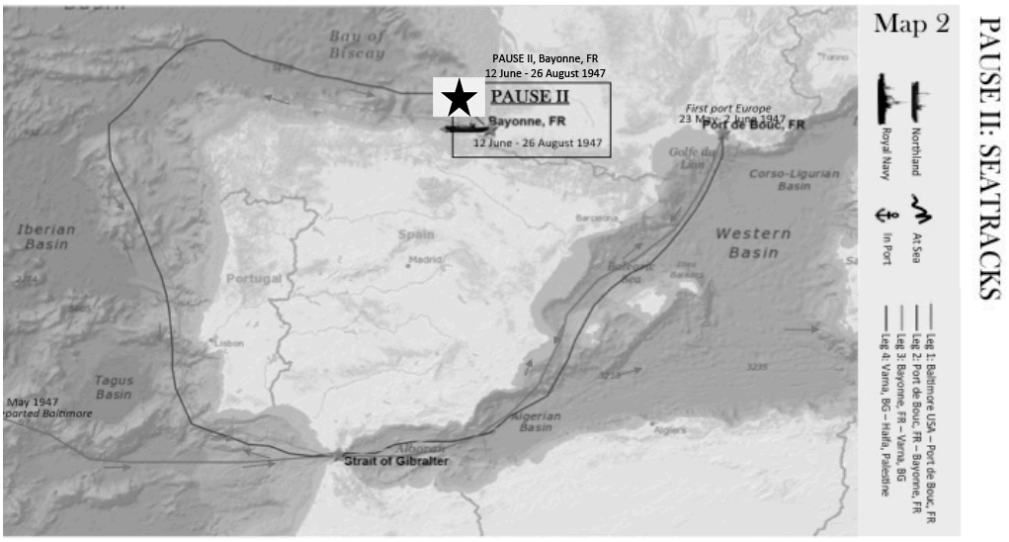


Figure 45. Palestine Pause Map 2: to Bayonne, France.
Source: Author. Created 2017.

> *'That same night, sitting in our little dining room, somebody told us half our engines went dead. Here we were in the middle of the ocean and half power.'*
>
> - Eddy Kaplansky in Ben-Tzur, 2015, online.

The hired officers and volunteer crew sailed *Northland* out of Baltimore Harbor on April 30, 1947 and set off for the French Mediterranean port of Port de Bouc, a distance of approximately 4,435 nautical miles. Crossing the Atlantic entailed a difficult 23-day voyage plagued with technical problems and exacerbated by rough Atlantic weather. Eddy Kaplansky recalled sharing the watch with his friend Laz on the Bridge under 2nd mate.

> *'We …sailed down Chesapeake Bay for the open waters of the Atlantic. Upon rounding Cape Hatteras, we encountered a fierce Atlantic storm. Our little ship, only 216 feet long and 39 feet wide, pitched and rolled violently in waves up to 30 feet high. Everyone was soon seasick, including the Captain. The ship's motions were at times violent enough to toss dishes out of their 'stormproof' storage racks. But there was no respite from our agonizing non-stop routine of four hours on the job, and eight hours in bed trying to get some sleep. Few of us even thought of food'.*
>
> - Eddy Kaplansky in Ben-Tzur, 2015, online.

As noted in chapter 3, *Northland* was difficult to control, heavy at the wheel and slow to respond under power even in calm conditions. Those characteristics of *Northland's* seakeeping that had made it tough to handle in rough arctic waters

plagued the new crew in the Atlantic Ocean just much as it had its former Coast Guard crews.

Half the engines failed that night. The next day the gaskets blew out on the other engine. Later, the 'good' engine blew a gasket while the other was being repaired. 'We wallowed[62] helplessly for many hours; for a while in total darkness before an auxiliary generator started operating' (Ben-tzur, 2015, online). Lack of control at the bridge means a captain cannot orient the ship toward wind and waves to mitigate rolling and heaving. Wallowing in the mid-Atlantic must have been at the very least uncomfortable, particularly for the new sailors. One account describes how a former infantryman threw up on every one of his two-hour stints at the wheel (Greenfield, 2015, p. 136). The machine shop on board was equipped for at-sea repairs, but the crew had little expertise in using it, thus repairs took time to carry out extending the discomfort and vulnerability intrinsic to wallowing.

The ship arrived in Port de Bouc near Marseille on 23 May where the Mossad's Marseille agents Ginesta & Company handled port entry paperwork. The Hagana's European Headquarters was in Paris, but Mossad's French operations run by Shmarya Tzameret, were naturally centered in a maritime locale and Port de Bouc served as Mossad's naval base. In his unpublished PhD thesis, Alan Swarc argues that Mossad chose France as its primary base for post-war clandestine immigration operations because the country was in charge of its own borders, which allowed for the movement of Displaced Persons (DPs) from elsewhere and the establishment of pre-immigration camps. Crucially, elements within the French coalition government covertly supported the effort, as did the surviving Jewish community whose intermediaries worked to smooth out relations between the Mossad and the government (Swarc, 2005).

Tzameret and his team determined who was to command and operate each ship, what adaptions were to be done and where and by whom they would take place. They (usually) determined the passenger list and numbers to be taken on board. Although Mossad personnel were to join the ship in France, the continuation of

[62] To wallow is to be at sea without control or propulsion at the mercy of sea conditions and subject to any combination of the six ship motions.

service by the officers and crew that had delivered the ship were also required to carry out the mission.

Crew Change

Having reached France, the merchant crew, as agreed when they signed on, chose whether to continue (whether as paid crew or volunteers is not entirely clear), or to leave the ship and return to the US. Most accounts indicate that all but one of the crewmembers chose to continue and that the Chief Mate of *Paducah* Danny Maltese transferred over to become Captain under the name of 'Morgan'. At the port, the persevering crew registered as having departed the ship and then were re-registered under aliases as a new crew using documents forged by Hagana experts in what Avriel describes as 'The Studio': 'a reliable outfit that had acquire a special standing in our small world of conspiracy' (Avriel, 1975, p. 323).

The workshop near Marseille had reached a high level of proficiency. The two women in charge were now assisted by experts and resources in every aspect of forging documents: there was a printer from Haifa who had been brought over to make rubber stamps; a young painter who knew how to imitate calligraphy; a huge selection of passports from various countries that could be used by anyone merely by changing the photograph; and a variety of inks that would pass the common test for authenticity' (Avriel, 1975, p. 323). The crew was counting on the credibility of the false documents.

Figure 46. Palyam member Yehuda Ben-Tzur and his forged passports.
Source: Author photo, January 2016.

'In British eyes we were 'aiding and abetting illegal immigration,' a 'crime' punishable by up to eight years in prison, a fine of £10,000 or both'. They could also be stripped of their maritime certifications, a threat that worried some more than the prospect of imprisonment. 'Our entire crew was therefore 'discharged' at Bayonne a new crew signed on; the same people with new names' (Ben-tzur, 2015, online). Henceforth, the origin of this crew was hidden, while their persons remained in plain sight – above board. This switch has flummoxed writers of Aliyah Bet's history (as well as British intelligence operatives), who often conclude that 'The crew was dismissed as soon as it arrived (a feature common to most ships engaged in illegal immigration traffic) a new crew was engaged by Schulman' (FO E 9159/84/31).

Genuine passports and maritime certificates were hidden on board the ship in secret caches and the crew assumed false identities. They could no longer claim their service as a routine ship delivery and were committed to the clandestine mission. And although legally in charge of ship operations, Captain Morgan was no longer the primary decision maker aboard *Northland*. At Port de Bouc, Mossad personnel boarded and the ship's command structure was divided between ship operations and mission delivery.

The Mossad crew, referred to as 'emissaries' by their own organizations and by the volunteers as 'shu-shus' (as in hush-hush), came aboard to take charge of

preparations. They mostly came from a small coterie of young idealistic Jewish Palestinians - committed Zionists. 'The tradition of the pre-state Israel labor movement had cultivated a myth about the building of the country in which these young people had a key part' (Hadari, 1991, p. 129). Tzameret appointed Yosef (Yoske) Almog as the Mossad Commander for *Northland*. He was one of 15 students trained in 1945 as Mossad commanders by Dov Magen and Shmuel Tankus (later commander of Israeli Navy).

In addition to maritime skills, they were taught how to convert cargo ships to carry immigrants and how to avoid being deceived by foreign 'professionals' (Hadari, 1991, p. 7). Almog, in his testimony, recalled that, 'The ship came from the US to France and its code name was 'the *Northern.*' I was assigned to be commander and I had to prepare it independently' (HAH 4.51). His crew included his second in command, Shmulik Haram; Avraham Meron, an engineer; and two Gideonim (Radio operators) Ahron Michaeli and Ptahia Feig. The last two had undergone extensive preparation.

The connection between the ships and the shore stations was critical to the success of the mission. Gideonim instruction was organized by the Jewish Brigade and delivered by Menachem Keller of Kibbutz Kfar Gil'adi. The training took several months and entailed the memorization of codes based on Hebrew. Mocha Limon, Almog's equivalent on *Paducah* explained to Captain Rudy Patzert, 'We need our own operators who know Hebrew and our codes. Hebrew is a great secret service language, [because] so few people can uderstand it' (Patzert, 1994, p. 76).

The ship was now both workplace and home to two very different sets of people united by participation in the Aliyah Bet assemblage. The spoken language on ship was English due to the nature and composition of the crew. The traditional maritime hierarchy of command, so evident in the ship's service in the Coast Guard, was disrupted by this duality although there was no real confusion amongst the crews. 'The shu-shus', said *Paducah* volunteer Lawrence Kolberg, 'were the Palestinians of the Hagana and our real bosses. They were like owner's reps, but carried no rank or title' (Ben-tzur, 2015, online). 'The contact between us and the crew of American volunteers was very good. One of them I met previously when he was navigational officer on 'Chaim Arlosoroff'' (Ben-tzur, 2015, online).

Even before the refit had taken place, the ship's identity had transitioned from surplus government small ship to clandestine immigration vessel, although no adaptations to that purpose had yet taken place. The *Northland* 'had a normal career until 4 May 47 when her master Captain MITCHELL, was ordered to move to BAYONNE for refitting. There, a certain CAPTAIN MORGAN of Room 32 GRAND HOTEL, took over command' (HAH 80/623/5).

The passage from Baltimore to Port de Bouc was 'above board' and routine, but in Port de Bouc the metamorphosis of the delivery crew, their secreted documents, and the addition of the Mossad command signified a commitment to covert operations. Still in possession of Panama registration, despite British attempts to have it revoked, neither vessel nor operators were as yet in violation of any maritime laws or regulations. This was perhaps the British Government's greatest frustration - that until a ship was caught in territorial waters with passengers who did not have legitimate visas for Palestine immigration, it was (nearly) impossible to prevent their purchase, outfitting, supplying or departure as a matter of law. When constructing British representations to the government of Panama, the Foreign Office noted to the British Ambassador, 'His Majesty's Government's suspicions are strong enough to amount virtually to certainty. Final proof can never be provided until she actually arrives in Palestine waters with Jewish illegal immigrants on board' (FO E 8450). Gathering evidence, however, was an ongoing process.

British intelligence services spied on Mossad activities in Port de Bouc, and in response Mossad decided to relocate ship re-fitting to Bayonne, France in the Bay of Biscay on the Atlantic coast. Almog received orders to leave Port de Bouc for Bayonne as soon 'as all preparatory work was done, our aim was to prepare the ship to take passengers in a small port that would not attract the attention of British intelligence. Our agent in Bayonne would make contact between us and the shipyard that was to do the work on the ship' (Ben-tzur, 2015, online).

After repairs to the engine were made and a new generator installed, they departed Port de Bouc on June 2. The *Northland's* course reversed out of the Mediterranean

at Gibraltar and into the Atlantic Ocean. Gideon Michaeli recalled that the journey to Bayonne took 9 days, far longer than it would have under calm conditions. Off Gibraltar, 'There was a storm, the waves were higher than the ship - up to the mast' (HAH 171.21). Passing Gibraltar, long under British control and the base of the Navy's Palestine Patrol, was a source of concern as at least one Hagana ship had been detained in the channel, so they timed their crossing for night and switched off the navigation lights.

Gibraltar is one of two points at which the Mediterranean Sea is open. The other is the Dardanelles. The major currents follow the coasts of Africa eastward from Gibraltar, swing past Israel and Lebanon and around Cyprus, and then round the Aegean, Adriatic and Tyrrhenian Seas and along the French and Spanish coasts back to the Pillars of Hercules. 'Favorable currents sped up the offshore passage but this required remaining alert so as not to drift onto the beach. My only experienced watch officer was a former Italian submarine commander and he couldn't navigate a toothpick in a washbasin. Fortunately, a young fair-haired Canadian who appeared to understand navigation and he took a load off my shoulders. It was Ed Kaplansky' (Ben-tzur, 2015, online).

'It was almost midnight when we reached our destination, but we had to wait for proper tidal conditions before entering the harbor. Since our donkey engine[63] wasn't working, had we dropped anchor it would have been impossible for us to raise it later. So, we sailed back and forth offshore until after daylight' (Ben-tzur, 2015, online). Once in port, 'The crew's pace was set by Lewis, our mate and now skipper of the 'Northland.' His first act upon landing in Bayonne was to go to the police station and introduce himself and describe his important position and connections, so that if we were brought around to be locked up, he'd receive good treatment. And he didn't have long to wait' (Ben-tzur, 2015, online). Nor did the authorities have to search much to locate miscreants, as the ship was a floating home for the crew. 'We always lived on the ship' (Ben-tzur, 2015, online).

During this time, when not on shore leave, the crew stood gangway watch in anticipation of British intelligence activity. They were otherwise free to enjoy

[63] A donkey engine is a supplemental machine used to hoist anchor and lift cargo onto a ship.

summer activities in Biarritz, just a few miles away. Meanwhile, Yoske Almog and his crew went to work on the refit and equipment installation required to transform the ship's materiality into a clandestine immigration vessel. All manner of subterfuge, evasion, and disguise were welded, sliced and hammered into the body of *Northland*.

ADAPTATIONS

> *'We used to take one passenger per ton,' D'Andria told Channan when he arrived. 'Now, with more passengers available, how about taking ten times as many?'*
>
> - Avriel, 1975, p. 267.

'When a building designed for one purpose is put to a completely different use, its value deepens' (Jacobs, 2006, pp. 253-4). The value of *Northland* to Mossad could be realized only through extensive adaptations, most of which were carried out to increase passenger capacity. The transformation was architected by Z'vi Tabor, a British-born physicist (University of London) and member of the Habonim Zionist Youth movement recruited on the basis of his technical acumen. Patzert described him as 'a little cocklebur of a man.' Tabor described himself as 'a Scot and a Jew and a bit of an electrician too'[64] (Patzert, 1994, p. 59).

Whereas for a terrestrial structure, 'site is eternal' (Duffy, 1990, cited in Brand, 1994, p. 57), for a ship, it is core structure held constant that produces the site, in effect, the 'bones' of the ship. For both, 'Structure is perilous to change. These *are* the building' (Brand, 1994, p. 2). In *Northland*, Tabor had a robust hull on which to emplace a capable passenger ship but was also constrained by the structure and risks to stability. Such 'Remodeling skills are seen as 'unheroic' in architecture' (Brand, 1994, p. 109), but from the Zionist perspective, re-imagining the 218' cutter as a passenger ship capable of carrying thousands and reifying that prospect in steel and lumber was a heroic undertaking.

By the time Tabor set to work on *Northland*, he'd designed the refit of several other ships and knew what he needed to design a fundamental transformation to ship-

[64] Tabor went on to found Israeli's solar energy technology sector.

spaces while maintaining the stability of the ship. Each Mossad ship had to be refitted according to its structural possibilities. But the strategy across all the recently acquired ships was the same; accommodate the maximum possible passengers while making it possible to conceal their presence when observed from land, sea or air. This was to be accomplished, 'According to the traditions of unauthorized immigration procedures and the result of fifteen years of trial and error' (Hadari, 1991, p. 129).

There was a certain naivety at work in the Mossad imagination that was highly beneficial to that objective. In an earlier project, the refit of the Greek ship *Dimitrios*, 'At first Gaganis thought he had misunderstood the figures: a little boat like that could not accommodate more than 30, at the most 40 people for a trip that was a minimum of five days, and even worse, five nights, But Levi was adamant - he wanted 200 berths' (Avriel, 1975, pp. 222 - 3). So Gaganis took a correspondence course on shipbuilding and made it work. Tabor 'made it work' for *Northland,* but it required that he ignore conventional assumptions about ship capacity.

The *Northland* had been designed to carry up to 135 crew and 15 passengers. In WWII, a former USCG Commander described how in the middle of July 1944, 'Twenty army commandoes came aboard in Reykjavik and increased the complement to 168'. The added personnel exceeded the bunking capacity; so, three men were assigned to one bunk. Each of the three had eight hours sack time; then the next man would assume the horizontal. 'Hot bunk system, it was called' (Bilderback, 1997, p. 3). Rudy Patzert, Captain of *Paducah*, was incredulous about the conversion plans for *Northland's* sister ship to carry 1300 passengers. 'I carried troops during the war, and we crowded them, but never like this. Hell, it's impossible' (Patzert, 1994, p. 67). An encounter on a research trip to an archive in Washington State echoed that disbelief.

The discrepancy regarding carrying capacity with *Northland* was the reason, discussed on the Methods Chapter, that Captain Gene Davis, Director of the Northwest Coast Guard Museum in Seattle, told me that the Aliyah Bet ship *Northland* could *not* have been the Coast Guard vessel of the same name. He said a visiting French researcher had definitively concluded that the Aliyah Bet ship was in fact a British passenger ferry called Northlands that was used to run the blockade of Palestine. The confusion emanated from the similarity of name. 'There are a lot of

articles that say they were the same ship, but our ship could *never* have carried so many people' (Commander Davis, 2014, Interview).

This disconcerting event occurred in my first year of empirical research and I felt more than a little panicked at the thought I might be headed down a dead end. In fact, it *was* the same ship. The methods I employed to become familiar with the ship's core structure, internal spaces, and changes made to both over time armed me with data and images to prove that the Aliyah Bet ship was indeed 'simply' another configuration of USCG Cutter *Northland.*

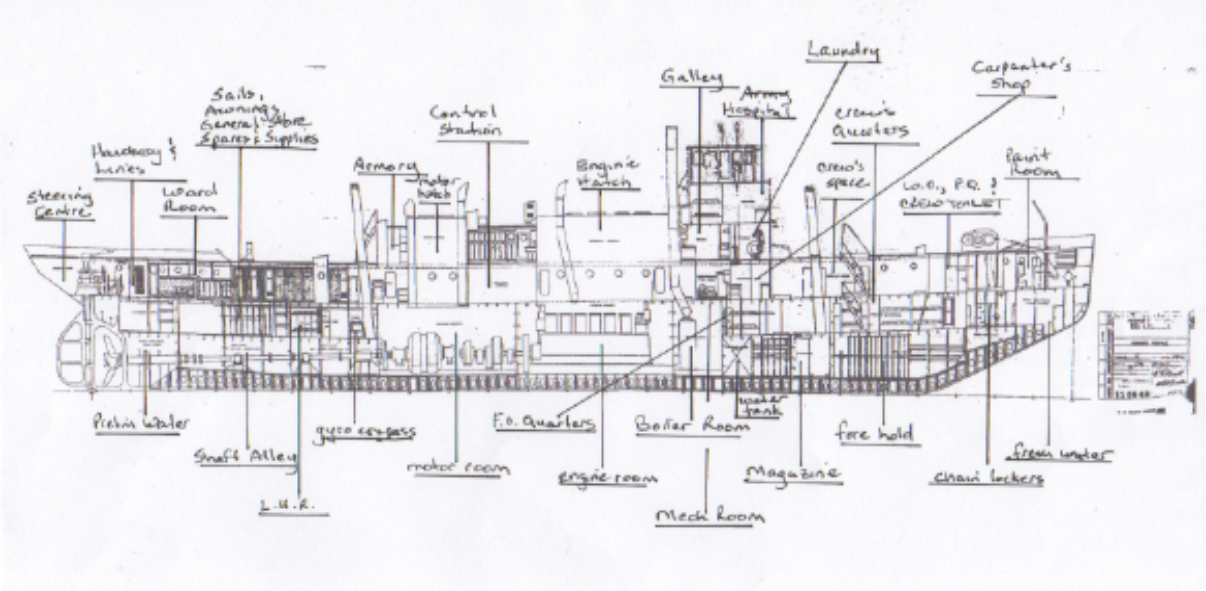


Figure 47. Blueprint exploration.
Source: Author. Created 2017.

On my next visit, I used photos and my version of the ship's outboard profile in 1947 to convince him that 'his' ship was the blockade-runner. 'I'll be damned,' said Davis.

Following Tabor's plans and using the lumber loaded in Baltimore[65], local French carpenters and ship-fitters removed fittings and partitions to install 1,700 wooden bunks throughout the Berth Deck, shelf-like structures three units high and two deep. One volunteer described them as 'hutches.' Interior cabins were ripped out, and three-tiered shelves about six-feet deep were installed in every conceivable space. The workmen were told that 'The United Fruit Company owned the ship and

[65] There were two reasons the lumber was purchased and loaded on board in the US. First, after the war, construction materials were scarce and expensive. Second, Mossad hoped to escape the detection of British intelligence surveillance of European shipyards for clandestine immigration activity.

they were converting it into a ‘fruit carrier.’ ‘Bananas' became the code word for our future passengers’, said crew member Kaplansky, in keeping with the stricture to keep the purpose of the ship refit under wraps (Ben-Tzur, 2015, online). 'Every 20" a Jew! We're a banana ship, everyone knows. But bananas - you hang or they get bruised' (Greenfield, 2015, Interview).

Figure 48. Bunk Installation in a Mossad Ship c. 1944 - 1947.
Source: Hagana Archives, Tel Aviv.

The prospect of sustaining life on board for nearly two thousand people requires more than horizontal space in which to pack them. Hygiene was a major conversion issue, as was ventilation. The number of passengers multiplied by the frequency of elimination meant additional 'toilets' would be needed. They were constructed of planks over both port and starboard sides at amidships, with holes cut through and screens facing seawards: ‘…toilets hanging over the sea’ (Patzert, 1994, p. 67). This adaptation was both necessary and problematic. 'Like people, buildings would have far fewer upkeep problems if they had no orifices' (Brand, 1994, p. 117).'The root of all evil is water. It dissolves buildings. The universal solvent makes chemical reactions happen every place you don’t want them. It consumes wood, erodes masonry, corrodes metal, peels paint’ (Brand, 1994, p. 114). These new bolted on orifices would affect *Northland’s* condition in multiple ways, both olfactory and erosion. For breath, ventilation shafts were added to the berth deck to provide minimum levels of air circulation. For sustenance, the crew mess was converted into a galley. For health, additional beds and equipment were installed in the sick bay to fit it as a full hospital ward.

Other modifications were made to facilitate communications. A loudspeaker system was installed so that messages and instructions could be transmitted to all parts of the ship, '…placing them so not a single person aboard the ship would ever be out of reach of the sound of a voice from the bridge' (Patzert, 1994, p. 67). Two radio transmitters were placed on board. One installed in place of the Coast Guard's unit in the Radio Room and the other hidden for anticipated covert use. A network of secret radio transmitters was established in every port earmarked for future activities. Every ship, even the smallest barge, had to carry a transmitter-receiver - for contact with the port they had departed, with the shore they expected to reach and with other Mossad ships (Patzert, 1994, p. 67).

Figure 49. Palyam Gideoni radio operator and transmitter, c. 1945-1947.
Source: Palmach Museum and Archives, Tel Aviv.

Hideaways or caches known as 'sliks' (סליק in Hebrew) were constructed for the back-up transceiver, crew and passenger documents, cash and human beings. In anticipation of British interception, a 'secondary bridge' control system was installed in the engine room. Door handles were altered so they could be quickly removed to obstruct intruder access to the bridge and engine room. By early August, these changes had been completed.

In his recorded testimony, Ahron Michaeli recalled, 'We spent two months there. During that time, we were simply building, disassembling the old and preparing the cells and storage rooms and started assembling the shelves. There were two professional carpenters and beside them all of the crew took part in the repairing the ship. Also, the Americans helped, they were enthusiastic, and the spirit was high'

(HAH 171.21). Bayonne must also have been where the Star of David flag and the banners and signage to display the ship's Hagana name were taken on board, readied to declare a new ship identity. Said Almog, 'When preparations were ended, there were 1700 places ready for them [passengers]' (HAH 4.51). 'The ship was meant to take immigrants from [Gdansk] Poland and we prepared for that' (HAH 4.51).

As the ship was being converted for active participation in the Aliyah Bet assemblage, British agents identified it as a probable 'illegal immigration ship' and the local press were also on its trail. A ship in port is a sitting duck. 'At first, we seemed to be accepted as a cargo ship by the people of the town, but after a while, our real purpose became known and the French reporters and photographers began coming around. They asked what the wooden shelves were for and we told them we were going to carry bananas on them. The next day, the Bayonne paper was headlined 'Couchettes pour les Bananas' with a story that we were going to run refugees to Palestine' (Ben-tzur, 2015, online).

Foreign Office records indicate intelligence agents were gathering evidence to pressure France to prevent the *Northland's* departure. 'It is obvious that so small a ship could not possibly carry legal passengers in the numbers indicated by these supplies,' referring to a copy of the ship's manifest. 'The NORTHLANDS[66] has no certificate to carry passengers, and therefore is limited to 12. Carries a Jewish crew of 38' (FO E 8450/84/31). The Foreign Office continued to pressure Panama to withdraw registration. '…efforts to prevent these vessels from embarking Jewish illegal immigrants would be considerably facilitated by the withdrawal of Panamanian Registration' (FO E 8450/64/31). Bevin intervened personally by telegram to the Panamanian Ambassador, communicating that he was '…OF OPINION GOVERNMENT MUST CANCEL REGISTRATION (see telegram)'. Mossad's plans for *Northland* had changed, but for different reasons. Just as *Northland* was ready to leave Bayonne, Mossad Chief Saul Avigar met with Almog. The *Northland* had crossed paths with the most notorious contested ship in Aliyah Bet history.

[66] 'NORTHLANDS' was the identifier for the *Northland* used in British Communications, possibly because it was confused with a former British passenger ship of that name.

Another American Aliyah Bet ship called *President Warfield*, was renamed as the Hagana ship *Exodus 1947 (Exodus).*[67] The British Navy intercepted *Exodus* 22 miles off the Palestine coast (well outside territorial waters). The interception had caused extensive damage to the ship, 200 injuries and three fatalities amongst the crew and passengers. The incident marked the Cabinet Office's first implementation of a policy termed *refoulement* (the return of refugees to the point of departure). The costly Cyprus camps were overflowing due to earlier Aliyah Bet arrivals and the British Government sought an alternative. To exacerbate the situation, although the ship had departed from France, the passengers were the first group to come from Displaced Persons (DP) camps (former concentration camps near Hamburg). They had transited through France and embarked on *Exodus 1947* at the French port of Sete. When their ship was towed to Haifa, passengers and crew were transferred to three British prison ships which sailed back to France in an operation code-named 'Oasis'.

Mossad could not contemplate accepting a refoulement policy, as it undermined entirely the Zionist project. The British Government pushed the policy forward for the same reason, hoping that DPs deciding not to board the ships only to be returned to their point of departure. The approximately 4,500 *Exodus* passengers refused to disembark, and the French government declared 'Faithful to her old traditions, France will continue to serve as a refuge and shelter for the persecuted and will accept all people from the *Exodus* who are willing to remain in France of their own free will.' Few departed, mainly those needing medical assistance. On 10 September, the three transport ships left Sete and sailed for Hamburg. When they arrived back in Germany, the passengers were interned in former concentration camps. The incident raised public awareness, tremendous sympathy for the would-be immigrants and damaged the reputation of the British Government in what Avriel referred to as Bevin's 'pyrrhic victory' (Avriel, 1975, p. 330).

[67] Because the ships' names were not legally changed, I characterize the Hagana names as appended and then refer to the ship by both names: i.e., *President Warfield/Exodus 1947*.

Due to the situation with the *Exodus*, Avigar decided to change course and instructed Almog to divert *Northland* to Romania where it (and the *Paducah*) were to embark up 4,000 immigrants. The *Northland* had been adapted to accommodate 1700 and the *Paducah* could accommodate no more than 1300. They were 1,000 spaces short between them. In his final report, Almog said, 'The solution was to load 1000 more people on the deck of the *Northern* due to its special arrangement. This ship was 2000 ton and was built specially as a ship for weather observation in the American Sea in the North Sea. It was built as an icebreaker and was very stable. Northern has a rich past in activities against the Nazi navy in the North Sea and sunk a number of German ships. For that purpose, we fortified one deck, so we could take 1000 people on it' (HAH 4.51).

Photographs of this configuration reveal the profile with the aft deck raised and enclosed. This last adaptation was designed to both accommodate and hide the presence of the additional passengers. The ship was again ready to depart but was detained again. 'The French authorities confiscated the ship due to fines on the *Exodus* that had left Sete without permission. It belonged to the same company as the Northern does. That company should have paid a fine of 10M French Francs. But with the influence of the former President of France, Leon Blum, the fine was lifted, and the ship was allowed to sail' (HAH 4.51).[68] The British Royal Navy hoped that it would not be necessary to intercept the ship.

A memo from the Commander in Chief of the Mediterranean fleet optimistically reported that, 'NORTHLANDS is still held up in Bayonne and not likely to get out…she is under a lien to the French authorities for payment of a debt incurred by President Warfield. Whatever happens, it is not likely that both [the Northland and Paducah] will appear in Palestine together' (C. in C. Memo, 12 August 1947). Upon finding that the fine had been paid, a British Foreign Office memo commented that it 'was not steep enough to accomplish the prevention of the ship sailing' (FO - E 9159). Given the millions of dollars raised for the immigration project, there was probably no fine large enough to have immobilized the ship in Bayonne.

[68] There are actually several explanations as to how the fine was addressed, one suggests the French were persuaded to dismiss it, another that it was paid and a third suggests some cash was dispersed in the process.

French authorities appeared to acquiesce to British pressure by forbidding the embarkation of passengers in Bayonne, as Northland did not have the requisite paperwork for passengers. Of course, there was no longer a plan to embark passengers onto *Northland* in France. The British Foreign Office continued to pressure Panama to deregister the ship, but the 'Masterly inactivity of the Panamanian Consular-general' at Bordeaux dovetailed with French cooperation. Diplomatic interventions failed to convince the Panamanian Consul to revoke the ship's registration based on representations that its documents were forged and/or misleading. The Panamanian Consulate instructed the Maritime Inspection Department in Bayonne to detain the ship pending the receipt of lists of the type and quantity of supplies and nautical accessories on board.

Panamanian Consul Luis Ruiz wrote to his British counterpart, 'With regard to the suspicions aroused by this ship owing to the tremendous quantity of foodstuffs and accessories she carries, I should inform you that the Legation has given clear instructions to our Consul at Bordeaux so that he may take the necessary steps to prevent her taking clandestine passengers aboard'. 'After a delay, the ship's agent and the ship's chandler arrived and brought the lists', wrote Luis Ruiz, Consul of Panama when he cancelled a previous letter to the Maritime Inspection in Bayonne, '…as there is nothing in them to indicate that they exceed the necessities of a normal voyage, and as they are signed and sealed and certified correct by the Captain this Consulate does not see any reason for sanction against this Panamanian ship, and in consequence would not proceed to detain her if the port authorities grant the necessary sailing authorisation' (FO 72/798/47).

On September 12th, a letter to Monsieur Ocana, First Secretary of the Panamanian Legation in Paris from G.A. Crossley of British Embassy Paris complained, 'We would be glad to learn in what way the lists were 'certified correct' and whether the Consul simply took the Captain's word for it. If so, we shall be justified in registering a string of complaints about his lack of cooperation. We had indeed hoped he would bestir himself to the extent of going on board the vessel to see for himself, but if that was too much for him one would have expected the statements of the Master to have been certified correct by someone other than the Master!' (FO 72/798/47). Panamanian resistance was also at least partially self-inflicted due to a British campaign to discredit Panama's flag of convenience and harass ships that flew it.

Negative articles were placed in British papers connecting Panamanian ships to illegal immigration. Vessels flying its flag were subject to extra inspection measures in British ports, regardless of likelihood of participation in Aliyah Bet.

Writing to Foreign Secretary Bevin, Panamanian Ambassador Don Dometrio Porras explained 'I am of the opinion that our Government seems reluctant to take immediate steps due to information sent directly to Panama by our Consul General in London with regards to the alleged boycott suffered by our ships in territorial waters and sea-ports of the United Kingdom. Ruiz had received protests from ship owners and passed them onto the Panama Government' (FO E 9082/84/31). The ship, refitted and supplied with fuel, water, provisions and barbed wire, departure papers in place, left Bayonne flying the Panamanian flag on August 26, 1947. And so to begin…

PALESTINE PAUSE II SUMMARY

The adaptations inscribed on the ship in Bayonne transformed *Northland* into a 'crude passenger ship' or, more accurately, a capable but crude *clandestine immigration* ship. Possession by the Mossad organization was the first moment of belonging to the assemblage. This second moment hinged on the transformation of the low-road structure into a form shaped by and for the purposes of the Aliyah Bet assemblage. The *Northland's* value in the assemblage was realized in the changes that expanded and extended interior and aft deck spaces for 'human cargo,' secreted hiding places about the ship, and altered mods of egress installed to maintain control of the ship when transgressed.

'Political action is not generic, but expressed through tactics, forms and innovations that take shape under specific material constraints' (Walters, 2015, p. 472). The key material affordance evidenced in Pause II is material malleability as surfaced by Mossad's reconfiguration of shipboard spaces and geographies (within the constraints of its sea-keeping qualities).

False identities and emissaries bound the existing crew to the assemblage by obfuscating their presence and added a new element in the form of Mossad men to the human jumble of *Northland*/Aliyah Bet assemblage. The resultant dual

command was, and is, extremely rare in conventional Western seafaring practices where hierarchy is deeply entrenched. The divided responsibility between ship operations and mission activities was clear. When it came to navigation, power plant, and crew duties, the merchant crew steered the ship. Mossad was in control of the overall mission tactics (and eventually, passenger logistics).

Mossad employed a number of tactics to avoid detection by British intelligence, but agents had located *Northland* (and *Paducah*) in Bayonne and identified it as a suspect vessel. They incorrectly called the ship '*Northlands*.'[69] 'All dressed up in layers of dissimulation, buildings are so naked' (Brand, 1994, p. 11). British diplomats and officials used multiple tactics to immobilize the ship in port. They were thwarted by the opposition's resources (cash and influence), resistance to British tactics on the part of the French and Panamanian governments, and the mobility of the ship still (mostly) operating within the legal framework of maritime law and conventions. Immobilization via debt was disarmed when the fine was dispatched.

As in Pause I, the maritime regime provided cover for Mossad, France, and Panama. The *Northland* retained Panamanian registry and flag when the Panamanian Consul chose to accept the Captain's representations regarding persons and supplies on board without a verifying inspection. French port authorities authorized the ship's departure, accepting its destination as 'Genoa' the Liguria city on Italy's Mediterranean Coast. Ship mobility enabled the redirection of *Northland* to Bulgaria, propelled (and repelled) by the prospect of a post-*Exodus* refoulement policy.

The Mossad network of ships and shore communication initiated oversight of the ship's movement at the moment of departure from Bayonne. Its name in the Mossad codebook was 'Northlander'. Mossad's code language was the little-known Hebrew and it appears it was not concerned the code name was so clearly connected to its true name. The ship escaped France on August 26, 1947 with its adaptations in place, its crew identities obscured, and its name mangled by British error and undisguised in Hebrew code. Absent of passengers, it set course for Bulgaria legally compliant but in a maliciously obedient kind of way.

[69] This may be another source regarding the ship and its identity, as 'Northlands' was the name of the passenger ship that had been identified by a French researcher as the 'real' Northlands of Aliyah Bet.

Palestine Pause III: Embarkation in Burgas

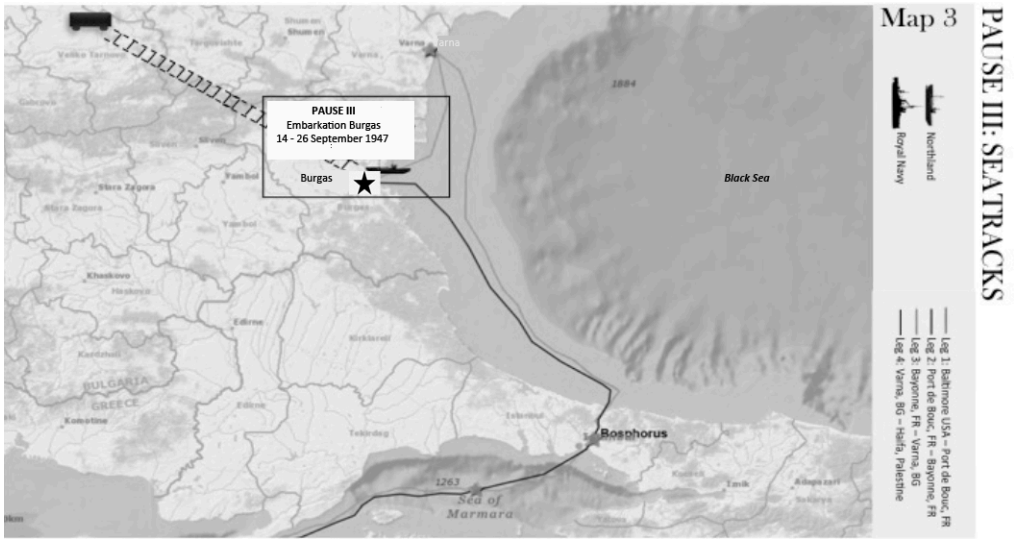


Figure 50. Palestine Pause Map 3: Embarkation.
Source: Author. Created 2017.

The *Northland's* metamorphosis into a clandestine immigration ship was complete, short of the immigrants themselves. This Pause centers on passenger embarkation at the Bulgarian Black Sea port of Burgas. From Bayonne, Captain Morgan plotted a course back through the Strait of Gibraltar and into the Mediterranean; eastwards to the Dardanelles and into the Sea of Marmara; and through the Turkish Strait into the Black Sea. As the ships sailed, the predominantly Romanian would-be emigrants assembled in Bucharest, ready to board trains southward to meet the ships at Burgas' port. They were to have company along the way.

When *Northland* re-entered the Mediterranean at Gibraltar, British Navy destroyers left Malta and paralleled the Hagana ships' sea tracks for nearly 2,000 nautical miles right up to the entrance to the Dardanelles. The Royal Navy had initially been reluctant to become embroiled in unauthorized immigration prevention. Communications between the First Sea Lord and the Colonial Office show the navy argued that guarding the Palestine Coast was a civil Colonial police function, not a military responsibility. Until recently, post-war immigrant ships had been small and carried relatively few immigrants. But it became evident that the organizers were establishing practices, routes and methods for landing that presaged a broader scope (and threat) in the future.

The navy instituted anti-immigration patrols on 20 October 1945 and the newly created Palestine Patrol made its first arrest on November 21 with the interception of a small sloop named the *Peacock* carrying just 20 refugees (Stewart, 2002, p. 35). At that time, the navy was demobilizing to peacetime levels with respect to vessels, manpower, and equipment. Mossad, in contrast, was expanding its operations. Despite its dwindling resources, the Royal Navy took on increased responsibility and began tracking (along with the Royal Air Force) and intercepting vessels of the 'shadow fleet'.[70]

The Royal Navy's command Flag Office Levant and Eastern Mediterranean (FOLEM) commanded the Palestine Patrol from Malta and reported to the Command of the Mediterranean Fleet. International law forbade interception or searching of vessels on the high seas unless a vessel was determined to have transgressed international law. Only a vessel flying an enemy flag was subject to seizure on the high seas, and then only until peacetime treaties were signed. Hence, the ships of the Royal Navy's Palestine patrol could only shadow, heckle, and intimidate Mossad ships flying under Panamanian and Honduran flags outside of Palestine territorial waters.

Even so, there are several examples of British naval ships transgressing those limitations, including the interception of one vessel off the coast of British-controlled Gibraltar and the interception of the *President Warfield/Exodus 1947* twenty-two miles off the coast, well within international waters.[71] Thus, Mossad had reason to be concerned about the Royal Navy's intentions, even when its ships complied with maritime law and sailed in international waters. The *Northland* attempted to pass Gibraltar without being detected.

'The moment came that we passed Gibraltar…We wanted to evade the British, so we turned off the lights although it was dangerous to do so. We did so, and it was a bit foggy, but it didn't help us. A British destroyer was waiting' (HAH, 4.51). As it passed through the Straits, the British signaled to state its destination. Irving Meltzer ('Sparks'), who ran the ordinary maritime radio and signal lights, flashed back that they were on their way "to see Naples and die" (Ben-tzur, 2015, online). The

[70] For detailed accounts of the Royal Navy's role in clandestine immigration to Palestine, see Ninian Stewart's British-leaning book '*The Royal Navy and the Palestine Patrol*' (Routledge, 2002) and Franz Lebriech's more balanced account in '*Britain's Naval and Political Reaction to the Illegal Immigration of Jews to Palestine, 1945-1948*' (Routledge, 2005).

destroyer adopted a parallel course, staying within the customary distance but always in sight.

'The British studied us and the ship all during the voyage, which was a very pleasant one during that season of the year' (Ben-tzur, 2015, online). Until it wasn't, though not due to naval intervention. The recent naval war had left behind a menacing maritime 'iron harvest'[72] in the waters ahead. As *Northland* crossed the Mediterranean, a second naval destroyer was added to the escort. The four ships (including the *Paducah*) continued on course for the Dardanelles. The Royal Navy's warned the ships about the hazards ahead, but their communications were received with mistrust and disregarded. The *Northland* encountered both extreme weather and live naval mines upon entering the Aegean. It was a dangerous combination.

MATERIAL HAZARDS

'We had to pass around two Greek islands. And after some time, the British wanted to pass to the right, and we to the left. We got a message from the destroyer. We answered them. They begged us not to go through the left side because there were mines. At the beginning we were skeptical about it, and then they saw we kept going, and again they urged us to change course. Then it was decided to wake up the Captain. They asked him what he thinks about this issue. They opened the chart and decided they were just bluffing - all they wanted was just for us to follow them. Again, they signaled us. But it didn't help. Suddenly, after we sailed for half an hour it was nearly evening, a storm started and there was no way to approach the deck. I went to the captain's cabin and we looked again. We were wrong' (HAH 171.39). The Royal Navy was not, in this instance, an antagonist.

'The British are right, and we are in the middle of a mine field, and in the middle of the channel so there is no use going back. So, we decided that floating mines can be detected somehow and maybe we can maneuver to the side of them. The whole crew without exception was tied to the ship, because the waves were washing the

[72] The term 'iron harvest' refers to the remnants of military weapons and equipment that turns up when farmers plow fields where battles were fought.

deck. They looked to see if there are any floating objects, and if there were, they would shout. It was a nightmare. Luckily enough we managed to pass without finding any of the mines, but the fear was great because it took many hours before we managed to leave that place' (HAH 171.39). The fear was justified.

Mines are '…a unique weapon in terms of both design and purpose…the primary reason for deploying a naval mine is to sink or damage vessels, with a consequent disruption of sea lanes and shipping that will permit control of the sea, or areas of the sea as well as contributing to sea area denial.' In naval mine warfare, the term 'mine' encapsulates 'the basic concept of an explosion occurring when a vessel strikes or is in the immediate vicinity of a mine is still a dominant feature of this means of naval warfare. They include limpet mines, contact mines which may be moored to the ocean floor, drift mines, floating contact mines, and magnetic acoustic mines (Letts, 2016, p. 541).

As of WWII, new types of mines were developed and deployed. Acoustic mines set off by the sound of a ship's propeller and engines; pressure-activated mines which responded to the change in water pressure caused by passage of the ship; other mines used combinations of types, such as pressure-magnetic or magnetic-acoustic, and those in turn, were combined with ship counters, which could be set to allow any number of ships to pass by safely before exploding. Some mines were programmed to deactivate after a certain period. Had the Mossad trusted the Royal Navy warnings, they could have avoided the danger in that channel. The navy's role in surveillance of Hagana ships and preventing their landfall in Palestine made it difficult for Alskog to trust the navy's motives. Lacking a crew with wartime naval experience and a careful examination of nautical charts with the relative position of mines recorded, the ship proceeded naively into infested waters.

Under the Hague Convention of 1907, which remains the only international legal instrument which specifically deals with naval mine warfare, '…notification and recording of mine locations must occur, especially so that such locations can be cleared of mines once hostilities end' (Letts, 2016, p. 543). Having traversed the minefield without incident, *Northland* left the Mediterranean and entered the Dardanelles. The Royal Navy fell back: '…the British picked us up and signaled 'See you soon,' and they turned back to the Greek part and not to Turkey as it's not for them to go into the Dardanelles' (HAH, 171.39).

TURNING EASTWARDS

By 1947, both the geographical and geopolitical division between east and west was critical to Mossad's strategy. The architects of Aliyah Bet took advantage of this inflection point to secure passengers and passage for clandestine Jewish immigration to Palestine. With Western European routes and ports successfully blocked by British diplomatic pressure and the prospect of further refoulement events, the organizers of Jewish immigration turned their efforts Eastward toward the newly formed 'Iron Curtain' and enlisted the cooperation of the Soviet Union and East European countries to both permit and support the exodus to Palestine.

The Turkish Straits, which divide the continents of Europe and Asia, provided a similarly efficacious geographical divide, a geopolitical barrier to Royal Navy vessels to the west and a conduit to a temporary sanctuary for Aliyah Bet ships to the east. The Straits include the waters of the Dardanelles, Sea of Marmara, and the Bosporus Strait. In this chain of waterways, the Dardanelles (61 km long and from 1.5 to 4 km wide) connect the Aegean, and hence Mediterranean, to the Sea of Marmara. The Sea of Marmara links to the Bosporus Strait (30 km long and rom 750 m to 3.7 km wide), which in turn is connected to the Black Sea.

Figure 51. Entrance to Bosporus, c. 1947.
Source: Naval History and Heritage Archives, Washington, D.C.

At this second entrance to the Mediterranean (the other being Gibraltar), a persistent central current on the surface transports fresh water from the Black Sea and deposits it in the Mediterranean Sea. A counter current, running beneath the

water, delivers saline water into the Black Sea. While, as Steinberg notes, the sea is not a metaphor, the physicality of this watery exchange in motion, the narrowness and immutability of the liminal divide between East and West is likewise reflected in the social exchange and conflict sited here, including the battles of Troy and Gallipoli. The freedoms to navigate through the Turkish Straits to take cover and embark passengers in the Black Sea were central to the experience of *Northland*, the *Paducah* and later, additional Mossad ships known as 'the *Pans*.'

The *Northland* and *Paducah* continued northeast toward the Dardanelles[73] their progress protected by the Montreux Convention of 1933 (still in effect at the time of this writing). Merchant and Fishing vessels have broad rights to passage, but naval traffic is restricted to the vessels of Black Sea states. Mithradates VI (Pontus) and Sulla (Rome) signed the first known treaty governing passage between the Mediterranean and Black Sea in 85 BCE.

In 1833 Russia and Turkey signed the Hünkâr İskelesi, which restricted warship entrance to the Strait to those belonging to Russia and Turkey. The London Straits Convention of 1841 was the successor to that agreement. British naval ships were prohibited from entering the Dardanelles under the treaty, and thus fell back. Foreign Office records show they lost track of the ship at the Dardanelles, 'Ministry of Foreign Affairs have no news of NORTHLANDS since she passed into the Black Sea but have telegraphed to their Consul at Varna to look out for her' (FO E 8763/955). This account mirrors that of crewmembers: 'the British Navy followed us to Turkey and then let us go to Burgas. They knew we had to come back the same way to reach Palestine' (Ben-tzur, 2015, online).

Once again, the two ships encountered waterways strewn with WWII naval mines. The mines, laid by the Romanian Navy, were probably similar to those deployed off the nearby port city of Constanza. 'In Marina Regala a Romaniei by Dorin Mara there is a table with the 5 barrages laid near Constantza on 15, 16, 17, 18 and 19 June 1941 with the coordinates, number of mines laid, and number of mines laid badly and other details. In total they laid 739 Vickers mines (of which 53 went down to the bottom of the sea), 248 UC mines (of which 4 had to be shot and destroyed) and

[73] In Turkish: 'Çanakkale Boğazı'.

1,328 protection mines (of which 27 had to be shot and destroyed)' (Nitu, 2005, online).

Captain Patzert recalled, 'We continued through the Bosporus and into the Black Sea. Ahead of us the chart showed miles and miles of areas heavily shaded in red. These were the minefields. We picked our way carefully up the coast toward Bulgaria, and because of the mines we had to take a long roundabout course toward Varna. We edged as close as we dared toward the mine-free channel and then waited for a pilot. The Russian pilot said 'We won't go in during the dark. Mines break loose and drift into the channel. It is swept clear every day, but at night it is risky.' He took them two miles offshore to wait' (Patzert, 1994, p. 97).

Once in port, drifting mines continued to menace. Eddy Kaplansky recalled that, 'While anchored waiting for *Paducah*, a floating mine was sighted, seemingly drifting towards the ship. Rising to the occasion, Captain Morgan dived over the side, adorned in a swim suit and swam out to push the mine out of harm's way' (Ben-tzur, 2015, online). Although intact, *Northland* was not able to embark its passengers at the port of Varna.

The Varna harbor police chief came on board the *Paducah* to tell Patzert that, 'The Chief has had a phone call from the British member of the Allied Control Commission. He demanded to know what this illegal Jewish ship was doing in the harbor.' The Chief told him 'He knew of no illegal Jewish ship, only a Panamanian ship with an American crew waiting for oil with no passengers'. The British were out-voted on the ACC, but independently issued a mandate. 'But we'll just shift you to Burgas, and if he issues another order, we'll simply ignore it and let him go whistle' (Patzert, 1994, pp. 110 – 11). The *Paducah* sailed south for Burgas and awaited *Northland*.

'The *Northland* arrived in the rain and gloom. It was larger than we were and a better-looking ship' (Patzert, 1994, p. 114). Once (mostly) secured in the harbor, the ships remained at anchor for over a week awaiting the arrival of the emigrants. 'There we were not allowed into the port. We had to wait outside the port about a kilometer. And then the Bulgarian police came and one of them spoke Hebrew. They brought supplies, and everything was paid for in dollars. And we went ashore' (HAH, 171.39). The experience of shore leave would have been familiar to *Northland*'s

arctic Coast Guard crew. ‘Finally, they agreed to allow us to go ashore for two or three days. Under escort of the police - a ‘guided tour’. Obviously, the Americans were let off first. They went to the dentist. We didn't do much, we went to the cafes, we got drunk. We turned all the coffee shops over and there was a scandal. After eight days, more or less, the immigrants came’ (HAH, 171.39).

The commanders and the volunteers on both ships were impatient to embark and depart. 'Each day they were supposed to be on the way, but weeks passed before we received word that the trains were loaded with people and would definitely arrive that night’ (Ben-tzur, 2015, online). ‘The time we had spent outside the port waiting for *Paducah* was spent organizing our daily life and preparing for confrontation, if necessary, with the British’ (HAH A134.7). The challenges of bringing thousands of would-be emigrants to Burgas were political as well as logistical.

Post-war Geopolitics

The multi-faceted post-war geopolitical context provided Mossad with opportunities to exploit the fissures between east and west, and also between allies. Mr. Rush, political assistant to Secretary of War, noted ‘Now there was this talk of Jewish Displaced Persons gathering at Constanza in the Black Sea and sailing for Palestine from the Russian Zone - a circumstance we ourselves might regard as reflecting a humanitarian attitude by the USSR but which others might interpret as a Great Power maneuver in which the Displaced Persons were pawns, to embarrass the Anglo-American grouping' (Marshall, 1946, p. 825).

The east/west divide between Soviet-controlled east and Allied-controlled west Europe was one important aspect of that context. But divisions were also emerging between the Allies, due to pre-war tensions suppressed in wartime and inevitable realignments endemic to post-war settlements. When *Northland* entered the Black Sea, the United Nations was actively debating the possible partition of Palestine.

The post-war Europe geopolitical configuration left the Soviet Union in tactical control of both Romania and Burgas reified through the aforementioned Allied Control Commissions (ACCs). Their purpose was to oversee, temporarily, local

governance. The ACCs had the right to approve policy decisions made by each national government, as well as authorize or veto appointments for significant government posts. The Allied (Soviet) High Command was in control in Finland, Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria with British and American members acting merely as political observers. The British Government claimed that, 'Illegal Jewish emigration from Roumania to Palestine is a joint operation between ardent Zionists and militant Communists' (FO 371/52629).

As the Allied Control Commissions (ACCs) emerged as agents of divided control between the Soviet Union and Western Europe over post-war territories, the implacable British commitment to retain the Mandate through a tactic of tightly throttled Jewish migration caused serious tension between Britain and otherwise allied nations. The post-war pogrom in Kielce, Poland on 4 July 1946 heightened survivors' anxiety about persisting anti-Semitism. In Kielce, only 200 of 30,000 Jews had survived the war. Of the survivors, 42 were killed in the pogrom and many others were injured.

There were smaller riots and killings elsewhere, often triggered as Jews attempted to return to their former homes. As a result, 90,000 Jews fled to Czechoslovakia and into Austrian and German DP camps. The number of children in the camps rose at an astonishing pace. In 1945 there were 5,000 children in the camps. By end of 1946 there were 24,000, mostly under 14. Survivors were getting married and having children. 'After so much death, the birth rate exceeded the experts' calculations and projections' (Szulc, 1991, p. 111).

The build-up of Jewish refugees in the US-controlled DP camps with no practical place for them to go other than Palestine fueled a diplomatic pressure-cooker. Destinations for Jewish survivors other than Palestine (including Alaska) had been proposed and abandoned. At end of war, there were 50k Jews among the 1.5M refugees in DP camps. But those number increased as thousands of Jewish survivors, experiencing and fearing a ferocious anti-Semitic backlash, left Poland, Romania, and Hungary for Austria, Germany and Italy seeking safety in the Allied Forces controlled zones. By the end of 1946 250,000 Jewish refugees filled 72 camps in the American Zones (Szulc, 1991, p. 92). Most of those from Hungary, Poland and Romania refused to be repatriated and the US Government would not force them to go - especially as Communist regimes took hold.

British policy was to refuse Jews entry to the camps, citing suspicions that the Zionists were directing large numbers of refugees to the camps to pressure the British to award more permits for Palestine immigration (When they eventually relented and let Jews in, they were denied food rations). In April of 1947, the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry finalized their recommendations. Britain had expected the six United States and six British private members to agree that Jews could return to their homes in Europe. Instead, it recommended Britain approve 100,000 visas and exacerbated tensions between the United States and Britain on the topic. President Truman agreed. The British Government opposed. The reality of Jewish homecoming was such that tens of thousands found the absence of family, the confiscation of their homes and possessions and violent pogroms rendered the prospect of repatriation at the least undesirable and at worst, completely impossible. 'This assumption proved to be another of Britain's catastrophic errors of judgment in the post-war period' (Szulc, 1991, p. 100).

Tension between the US and Britain with respect to Jewish refugees was not solvable through bi-lateral alignment. 'The main difficulty with foreign governments is (a) that they do not wish to draw upon themselves criticism from the Jews and the Americans: (b) they have little or no legal grounds for interfering in the movements of these Jews and (c) they naturally do not wish to have large numbers of these illegal immigrants stuck in their territories' (FO 371/57693). 'No government was willing or prepared to shoulder the full responsibility for the Jewish refugees in Europe, not only because it was expensive but also because is raised a basic international political problem: the question of how to deal with Britain over Palestine' (Szulc, 1991, p. 147).

In frustration at the outcome of the Anglo-American Inquiry, the Mandatory Administration mounted an operation code-named 'Operation Agatha' against the Jewish Agency, Palmach and Hagana (which included Mossad operations) on 29 June 1946 in what has come to be known by the Jewish community as 'Black Saturday'.[74] Although many key personnel were arrested and detained, Saul Avigar remained free in Paris and Mossad's operations continued. What remained of the Jewish

[74] University of Tel Aviv Historian Motti Golani provides a full account of these events in his book '*Palestine between Politics & Terror'* (Brandeis University Press, 2013).

Agency and Hagana were divided as to whether the Mossad operations potentially prejudiced the outcome in the United Nations partition debates.

The loose command structure between Hagana and Mossad meant that Avigar and his agents could proceed without HQ approval, which they did. The *Northland* and the *Paducah* would proceed as the first unauthorized immigration ships to depart from the Black Sea following the war. The embarkation of Jewish emigrants transformed it into a passenger ship at last. The crisis of the *President Warfield/Exodus 1947* proved that Britain was willing and embarkation beyond British influence would serve to obstruct the policy in the case of ships departing from Black Sea port.

LOGISTICS

Mossad arranged with Romania to permit thousands of Jews to emigrate, and with Bulgaria to enable transit across its border to Burgas. Just as American dollars (in cash) smoothed the ship's passage through the Turkish Strait, the currency secured the transit of its future passengers. Irving Meltzer characterized those payments as, '… a ransom to the Communist authorities' (Israeli Vets, "Meltzer Obituary"). Millions of US dollars, mostly donated from US Jews, ensured there was plenty of cash to remove friction in the process.


FOR SALE to Humanity
70,000 Jews
Guaranteed Human Beings at $50 a Piece

Hecht and Peter Bergson placed this and similar ads in The New York Times and other U.S. papers, February 1943.

The US dollar could fetch 10 or more times the official rate on the black market. 'Shlomo Argov, the Mossad lead in Eastern Europe, was based in Prague. He travelled to Switzerland and brought back 300k to 400k in cash on each trip' (Szulc, 1991, p. 116). Mossad paid Romanian officials for 'exit permits.' In Bulgaria, Deputy Prime Minister Traicho Kostov granted Mossad permission to use Burgas for embarkation.

With Russian tacit approval, both Romania and Bulgaria paid scant attention to British entreaties to prevent embarkation and departure, returning only weak signals of cooperation, then silence and eventually outright dismissal. The Foreign Office proclaimed that, 'Illegal Jewish emigration from Roumania to Palestine is a joint operation between ardent Zionists and militant Communists' (FO 371/52629).

Mossad personnel coordinated the activities of multiple groups to arrange with the Romanian Government to facilitate the emigration of 50,000 of 400,000 surviving Romanian Jews. They persuaded the Bulgarian Government to permit and assist with transit across the border and departure from Romanian ports (Alsberg *et al.,* 1945, p. 703).[75] The complex logistics behind the operation required coordination between three organizations and Mossad. The Bricah[76] was formed toward the end of the war by young Eastern European Zionists to assemble, protect and transport Jews to embarkation points (Szulc, 1991, p. 105).[77] The Joint paid Bricah for food, transportation and other refugee expenses through chief Mossad rep in Prague. Jewish Brigade soldiers assisted in transportation and supplies. 'The Joint' served both as an above-board relief agency and a covert intelligence agency, (Szulc, 1991, p. 95) and organized railroad transportation across Eastern Europe and staffed major frontier border points with American and local employees (Hadari, 1991, p. 79). 'The overall operation was described by the British as a 'highly ramified and highly organized movement' (Szulc, 1991, p. 116).

THE EMIGRANTS/IMMIGRANTS

> *''We are away from the nest and we will not return to it soon'.*
>
> - Unidentified Passenger in a letter home, *HAH 5/623/80.*

A *New York Times* opinion piece described the post-war refugee crisis in this way: 'In 1945, the great migration of the survivors began: a sea of bodies, killed many times over and now resurrected. Some wanted to return to their countries and their homes, and some wanted to go to America, and some wanted to reach the shores of the Mediterranean and go from there to Palestine' (Appelfeld, 2005, p. 25). Between them, *Northland* and *Paducah* were to carry about 4,000 of the 50,000 Romanian Jews approved and selected for emigration.

Mossad and Bricah had selected passengers for prior voyages based on Zionists criteria, mainly young men and women of fighting age who could populate and

[75] Moshe Sneh, a member of the Jewish Agency Executive and concurrently a Hagana commander, coordinated between the Jewish Agency and the Mossad.

[76] Roughly translated as 'Escape'.

[77] Bricah is said to have moved approximately 150,000 Jews.

defend kibbutz. In contrast, local Romanian Jewish organizations included multi-generational families as well as orphans in *Northland*'s passenger manifest. 'The mixture of families - old and young, meant they were not suitable for kibbutz life' (Hadari, 1991, p. 55). But they would increase the Jewish population in Palestine if they managed to disembark there.

Mossad worked with Romanian Secretary General Bodnaras, who also served as head of the country's secret political police. The Foreign Office reported that 'Bodnaras enjoys the full confidence of the Russians. They work with the Roumanian Red Cross on the selection of emigrants and provision of collective Travelling documents. Lederer and Rohrlich arrange false visas usually for a South American country and usually issued by some unauthorized source in Budapest [actually Prague]. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is circumvented' (FO 371/52629).

As described earlier, compared with the overall Jewish survivor population, the situation in Romania appeared on the surface to be less problematic, but in reality, Romanian Jews had good reason to become Zionists. In his memoire Israeli writer Aharon Appelfeld called *Romania Mare* and beyond, 'the great cemetery of the Jews' (Kaplan, 2016, p. 136). Although exact numbers are unavailable, estimates assume that around 400,000 Jews survived WWII in Romania. Marshall Ion Antonescue, who was Hitler's second most important ally after Mussolini, contributed 585,000 troops to the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union. His record with respect to the Romanian Jewish population is decidedly mixed. He is known to have directly orchestrated, through starvation and murder, the deaths of up to 300,000 Jews in the north (Bukovina, Bessarabia and Transnistria). In late June of 1941, 13,000 Jews were murdered in a pogrom in Jassy.

This pogrom is characterized by Kaplan as the 'Signature event in which territorial loss, war and imminent territorial recapture, nationalistic rage, and anti-Semitism all coalesced.' 'The roots of Romanian anti-Semitism date to the westward migration of Askenazi Jews in the nineteenth century and are inextricable from the agricultural-based, blood-and-soil Romanian worldview - the upshot of a vast peasantry - that helped characterize both local political and intellectual circles since the beginning of the modern era. Jews simply did not fit in, even as they were so ever present. They were judged to be a foreign bourgeoisie who represented both communism and capitalism at the same time' (Kaplan, 2016, p. 137).

Yet, in Romania proper (Moldovia, Wallachia and southern Transylvania) 375,000 Jews were saved from local killings and from transport to death camps in Poland (Kaplan, 2016, pp. 134-5) It is likely significant that the decision to resist deportations was taken after the Nazi defeat at Stalingrad, and thus Antonescue was worried about his own fate and exercised an 'opportunistic mercy.' In this version, he was more a realist than a fascist and sensitive to 'shifting geopolitical winds' (Kaplan, 2016, p. 140). It is from these survivors that the majority of passengers for *Northland* and *Paducah* were selected (Ultimately, the passenger list also included a number of Hungarian, Polish and Russian Jews).[78] Once selected, they assembled in Bucharest and boarded Romanian trains secured by the JDC and started for the port of Burgas. Among them were thousands of Jewish orphans who needed new homes (Szulc, 1991, p. 111).

TO THE SHIPS

'The 'ma'apilim'[79] travelled for three days from Rumania to the Bulgarian border. A Bulgarian train carried them from the border to the port of departure at Burgas. Ephraim Shiloh was a Mossad agent in Romania, and he accompanied the emigrants to the ships dressed as a Bulgarian officer and coordinated the journey and boarding process with Bulgarian train guards recruited specifically for the purpose' (HAH 134.7).

[78] See Appendix C for partial passenger list.
[79] Ma'apilim is the plural Hebrew word for clandestine immigrants.

Figure 52. Jewish refugees on Bulgarian trains, c. 1946.
Source: Palyam Museum and Archives, Tel Aviv.

Each person had cost the JDC $50, which secured both passage and transit papers. Those genuine transit papers ensured they could reach Burgas. Boarding the ship would require paperwork of dubious provenance, convincing enough to pass Romanian and Bulgarian guard inspection. But those visas fooled no one. '…the issue of Syrian, Lebanese, Turkish or Egyptian visas to Jews (as reported…) was so obviously improbable as to cause immediate suspicion in anyone whose eyes were not deliberately closed. The issue of these particular countries suggests an impudent confidence and a certain sense of humour on the part of the Jews' (FO E 9158). The *Northland*'s passengers would be issued with Uruguayan visas. Uruguay, according to the British Foreign Office, 'Categorically denied the authenticity of these visas' (Avriel, 1975, p. 323).

EMBARKATION

Embarkation signaled the point at which the *Northland*'s identity was transformed into 'passenger ship' - the final embricated event immersing the ship into the Aliyah Bet clandestine immigration assemblage. The first train arrived on 21 September from Bucharest with passengers for the ships. 'The *Northland*, like a ghost ship, quietly slid opposite the empty place on the dock, and her heaving lines quietly

came leaping into the light. Our crew grabbed them and pulled until the weight of the heavy mooring line was dragged across the black water. Dripping onto the dock, the bight was dropped over the bollard. The big lines tightened, and *Northland* came alongside and was secured. Gangways…clattered onto the cobblestones of the pier. Men took up their positions' (Patzert, 1994, p. 118).

Many participants recalled how emotional the embarkation process was for the entire crew, both Mossad and merchant. It was a unifying event. They got off the train and moved directly onto the ship. Romanian and Bulgarian guards kept the area of the pier sealed. 'This was a very moving scene for all of us Israelis[80] and for the American crewmen' (Ben-tzur, 2015, online). Gideoni Aahron Michaelil was stationed at the gangway to count them as they boarded, with the *Paducah*'s Captain at his side. 'It was hard to suppress tears when the first of them started up the gangway. Suddenly, we understood fully the seriousness of the task before us' (Ben-tzur, 2015, online).

Captain Patzert of the *Paducah* at first observed the procession and then assisted the emigrants to board. He recalled, 'There were 3000 refugees, old people laden with huge packs containing all their worldly possessions, youth marching to the rhythm of militant Hebrew songs, orphan children and at the end a woman with her baby born a few hours earlier in a boxcar. Soon we were all busy trying to squeeze one more momma or kid into those three decker shelves' (Patzert, 1994, p. 7). Almog was surprised by an unexpected 150 babies carried by their mothers onto the ship in wicker baskets. This unforeseen situation required the conversion of the hospital quarters into a nursery.

'The people had expected to find Greek or Turkish sailors, so they were really surprised to find Jews, volunteer American Jews. John, the shu-shu said he wished there were 50 more of us, not because we were any good as sailors, but because we gave the people a lift' (Ben-tzur, 2015, online). Said Michaeli '…it was fantastic. The immigrants were pressed like sardines' (HAH 171.21).

Mossad had taken a ship that was designed for fewer than one hundred persons and filled it with nearly 3,000. 'The voyage to the Land of Israel was to be utilized to

[80] This testimony refers to 'Israelis', though the state of Israel had not been established until after *Northland's* interception. The term 'Mossad emissaries' would have been used at the time.

reshape the Diaspora Jew and turn him into an Israeli. The ship represented an important opportunity to refashion the new immigrants in the right way. For the emissaries all this was even more important because of the times the immigrants had been obliged to fight at sea and defend their ship against British destroyers' (Hadari, 1991, p. 153). In the sliks were 'Forged ID cards on the ships it is supposed that they were prepared in order to endow those who wanted to be smuggled to Israel' (HAH 4/258).

DEPARTURE

Prior to *Northland's* departure, several hundred male passengers observed Yom Kippur in a makeshift open-air synagogue on the foredeck. 'Looking at the moving sight from the bridge, I noticed Captain Morgan in their midst with talit and kippa to show that he identified with them' (Patzert, 1994, p. 135). 'It was almost Yom Kippur when our chef, exiled Spanish loyalist Enrico Lopez, was ready to feed our charges. Some Rabbis aboard urged that no food be distributed until after the fast, but others thought that the law of 'pikuach nefesh' applied. Shu-shus let people choose whether to eat or not' (Ben-tzur, 2015, online). 'The *Northland*'s deck was thronged with people rocking in prayer, casting the sins of the year into the water. When their skipper appeared on deck with a skull cap and prayer shawl, rocking, although not because of religious ecstasy, they were sure their fate was in pious hands' (Ben-tzur, 2015, online).

There was a certain urgency to leave on schedule, as negotiating the Turkish Straits was anticipated to be problematic. Shiloh received a message from Mossad's man in Turkey – 'we had to leave on time'. The British Government was pressuring Turkey to detain the ship in the Bosporus using a variety of pretexts including sanitary conditions, exceeding Plimsol line limits (load line), and overcrowding. Messages between Almog and the Paris Office show some panic as Paris requested details as to the number of latrines and life-saving equipment on board prior to sailing (HAH 14/248). It was almost daybreak when the loading was finally completed. The *Northland* pulled away to let the *Paducah* dock and embark its passengers, but embarkation was not yet concluded. About 80 young children had been left ashore; the *Paducah* had no room for them. They too, were taken onboard *Northland*.

At six in the morning on September 27, 1947 '*Northland*' pulled out with passengers singing Hatikvah, the Hebrew National Anthem (Patzert, 1994, p. 125). 'When we did leave, a young girl sang Hatikva. It was the most romantic moment of my Aliya' (Ben-tzur, 2015, online).

PALESTINE PAUSE III SUMMARY

The process of embarkation behind the 'Iron Curtain' solidified *Northland's* reincarnation as a crude but effective immigration passenger ship. This was a moment of ship-shaped metamorphosis, as described by William Hasty (with respect to pirate ship creation) as born of transformation and flux: When the Romanian, Hungarian and Polish men, women and children stepped off Bulgarian soil, crossed over the water, and made their way up the gangway onto the ship's main deck. Within the assemblage of Aliyah Bet, through material, mobile and maritime affordances, *Northland* became the thing it was acquired to be. 'A space defined by process, as a site wherein form and function were subject to continual negotiation, re-imagined and reshaped by social, political and practical imperatives' (Hasty, 2014, p. 351).

The mobility and maritime environment affordances derived from the ship's civilian designation and registration under Panama's flag of convenience were essential factors in achieving this transformation. The ship moved freely (though not without friction) from the Atlantic Bayonne to Black Sea Burgas under the protection of maritime laws and conventions. Royal Navy ships could shadow but not legally intercept or seize it. The Montreux Convention provided passage through the Turkish Straits while preventing the navy from following. It must be noted also that the maritime context not only protected, it also threatened the ship and its mission via the naval mine hazards that infested the waters of the Mediterranean and Black Seas in the post-war period.

The redesign of this 'Low Road' ship required a certain naiveté on the Mossad's part in general and Tabor's part in particular. Only in this moment were those adaptations employed to accommodate nearly 3,000 people on the 208' ship. The

adaptations designed to facilitate sleep, breath, sustenance and elimination were all immediately put to use. Thus transformed, the ship was itself a place of transformation, '…working through the multiple mobilities enacted in and constitutive of the material structures of the ship and the social, political and cultural interactions engendered therein' (Hasty, 2014, p. 455).

Emigrants with genuine transit visas for Burgas became immigrants possessing misdirecting forged Cuban visas and an implacable expectation that they would reach Palestine. ‘Imagination plays a key role in the discourse of power since empowerment implies a capacity to perceive one's real interests and connect them reliably to an imagined future’ (Dovey, 1999, p. 13). The ship, crews, and passengers were now fully engaged in the unauthorized immigration struggle. At full capacity, ‘Not only was the ship not merely a metaphor, it was a living thing, a transformative, material site of contested politics' (Hasty, 2014, p. 356). That contest continued to be one which took place both ‘above-board’ and clandestinely.

The geopolitical conditions following the war provided the Zionists with alliances, funds and cooperation from the Soviet Union, Roumania and Bulgaria to secure exit visas, ignore forged documents, provide transportation and secure food, water and supplies for the final leg of the journey. The relocation of embarkation to Bulgaria also rendered a refoulement policy essentially impossible to execute on geographical grounds, if the spectacle of the *President Warfield/Exodus 1947* had not most likely made it politically impossible to repeat.

William Waters describes a Tamil refugee ship as 'a kind of anti-ship of state' (Walters, 2015, p. 475). The *Northland* Aliyah Bet assemblage contested state power *and* at the same time embodied an imagined state, situated in the imaginations of passengers and crew. It was an alternate futures ship of state, a container carrying what Benedict Anderson posited as ‘an alchemic change from wandering devotee to local patriot’ (Anderson, 2006, p. 149). As Kim Dovey argues, ‘The design of built form is intrinsically hinged to issues of power precisely because it is the imagination and negotiation of future worlds’ (Dovey, 1999, p. 6). Reluctant Zionists packed on the ship like sardines negotiated for a differentiated new world and acquiring collective power to ‘confront state power in order conjure it in a form for themselves’ (Dovey, 1999, p. 6).

PALESTINE PAUSE IV: CROSSING THE MEDITERRANEAN

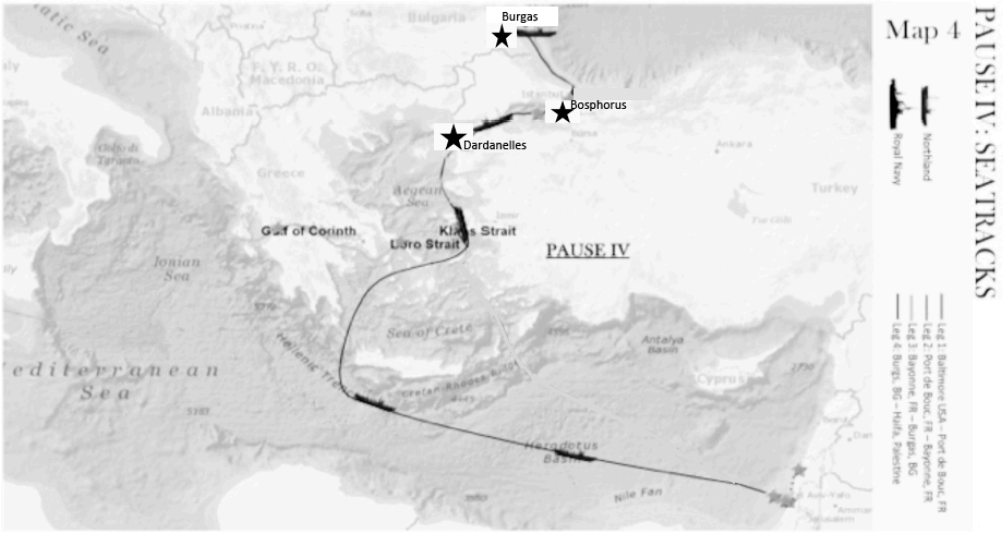


Figure 53. Palestine Pause Map 4 Crossing the Mediterranean.
Source: Author. Created 2017.

> *'The "Paducah" and "Northlands" have got away with 4000 Jews between them. This business goes in waves. It looks as if we're in for a big one'.*
>
> – FO E9011/84/31.

The very steel of the ship must have vibrated when the passengers broke out in the song Hatikvah ('hope') as *Northland* departed Burgas. Thus underway, *emigrant*s who departed Burgas became *immigrants* to Palestine on this 'Illegal Immigration Ship', the official British Government's designation for the Aliyah Bet ships. Alskog reported, 'On the vessel are 2720 people, of them 31 crew, 120 babies to age 4' (HAH, 4/258). The Zionists rejected the designation 'illegal.' 'Hagana Ship' was the contemporary Zionist label.[81]

The *Northland's* integration into the distributed assemblage of the Aliyah Bet project was now complete; reified by the passengers' presence and use of the material adaptations, by the cash stash distributed to smooth human and bureaucratic friction encountered in the direction of travel, and by the secret cache which kept identity documents secure. From this point forward, the officers and crew used their

[81] In Israel, the term 'Clandestine Immigration Ship' is used in museums and archives as the official term applied to the *Northland/Medinat ha'Yehudim* and the other ships used to transport Jews as a part of Aliyah Bet.

expertise to navigate maritime regulatory and physical environments, and to run the blockade and evade capture if at all possible. The *Northland's* declared destination was Havana, Cuba but everyone knew its actual destination was Palestine.

Between the Dardanelles and Palestine lay approximately 1,250 nautical miles. The merchant crew were no longer delivering the ship to a destination but delivering a people to a place. The Mossad personnel were responsible for their well-being and safety. 'The fact that we were carrying the remnants of the Holocaust to the land of Israel was a very emotional experience for the whole crew and we felt that way up to the very end' (HAH, 4.51).

The division of responsibility between Mossad and the merchant crew intensified once this ship was under way. Highly structured shipboard routines were instituted by the Mossad crew; each passenger was assigned to a group and systematically moved across ship spaces to access fresh air, sanitation, and two meals each day in rotations to deal with the extreme crowding both below and above decks. Travelling in tandem, *Northland* followed *Paducah* out of the harbor and headed for the Turkish Straits. The British Foreign Office Palestine urged the Turkish Government to detain the ships in the Bosporus Strait and prevent them from exiting the Dardanelles.

'The Bulgarian Government had been willing to prevent the embarkation of Jews for Palestine, but they had been faced with the statement that the Jews in question had valid visas and passports for other countries' (FO E9011/84/31). A British Foreign Office Telegram indicated it had urged the Turkish Government to prevent the ships from passing. 'The Montreux Convention should be used to prevent Paducah and Northland from passing through straits,' and received a 'Favorable Turkish reaction' (FO E 9011).

The Montreux Convention Article 3 states:

> *'All ships entering the Straits by the Aegean Sea or by the Black Sea shall stop at a sanitary station near the entrance to the Straits for the purposes of the sanitary control prescribed by Turkish law within the framework of international sanitary regulations. This control, in the case of ships possessing a clean bill of health or presenting a declaration of health testifying that they do not fall within the scope of the provisions of the second paragraph of the present article, shall be carried out by day and by night with all possible speed, and the vessels in question shall not be required to make any other stop during their passage though the Straits. Vessels which have on board cases of plague, cholera, yellow fever, exanthematic typhus or small-pox, or which have had such cases on board during the previous seven days, and vessels which have left an infected port within less than five times twenty four hours shall stop at the sanitary stations indicated in the preceding paragraph in order to embark such sanitary*

> *guards as the Turkish authorities may direct. No tax or charge shall be levied in respect of these sanitary guards and they shall be disembarked at a sanitary station on departure from the Straits'.*
>
> – Montreux Convention, 1936.

Moshe Agami, working from Prague, communicated with Almog and Moka to coordinate their response to that potential obstruction, as well as keep track of the ships' locations and relay instruction to events as they unfolded. As soon as they had departed, Agami requested details about the about sanitary facilities and life-saving equipment on board, presumably in preparation for a Turkish inspection at the Bosporus. 'Notify immediately how the toilets work on the Jewish State' (HAH, 80/623/5).

For the duration of the journey, the Mossad operatives communicated from ship to shore, reporting on location and course, planning each move towards the objective of beaching the ship on the Palestine Coast, and each countermove in response to British interference. 'Notify regularly about the actions of the enemy in detail' (HAH, 4/258). Though the merchant captains were accountable for charting the course to Palestine, keeping the ship running and supervising the merchant crew, the hired crew was of concern. To a telegram querying their performance, Almog responded 'For the two Italians the mechanist title is worthless. The three other goys are suitable. [Name unknown] who did the preparation did a clean job, he's suitable for the work. Our men on the ship did the work correctly' (HAH, 4/258).

The ship's Mossad Commanders were essentially field officers, accountable to station chiefs on the shore and to Saul Avigur, but able to make decisions regarding the mission as it unfolded. Agami sent an urgent request to both ships for information as to exactly who was on board: Mossad commanders, escorts and Gideonim; the nationality and religious identification of crew; speed and direction of the ship; rescue equipment and quantity; plan and equipment for defending the ship from interception; quantities of food, water and fuel; a complete list of immigrants; the location and number of sliks; confirmation that the ship commanders knew the new names for the ships and of the health status of everyone on board.

This communication exposes several key concerns on the part of land-based Mossad controllers. Until the ship was fully embarked and had departed, they could not be sure who had sailed on it. The *Northland* responded, 'Commander Uranov (Almog) Escort Arica, Engineer Abraham, Gideonim Aaron and Tachia. 6 gentiles, American

captain, 2 Spaniards, 2 Italian. One Russian – Volunteer. There are officer papers for an American Jew, and for the head of machinists and an Israeli one. The fortification of the vessel is not possible. A defense against gases is partial in the machine room and the wheel room. Reserve transmission device is out of order. Water in abundance, food and tobacco for 5 days. 50% youth from youth Aliyah groups. There are sliks for everything separately. The name is known. We hope to arrive on Thursday before noon. We passed Dardanelles. Health OK' (HAH, 4/258).

Returning to the Bosporus through the minefields took six hours, with lookouts posted on the fo'c'sle head and the bridge. Patzert, on the *Paducah*, recalled that 'The weather was perfect. There was a high, bright sun that gave just enough warmth to take the chill out of the autumn day, and the Black Sea was as calm and smooth as the top of a billiard table' (Patzert, 1994, p. 128). The two ships approached the Bosporus at sunset, where Turkish pilots boarded the ship to guide them to anchor off Istanbul. Gideoni Feig recalled that, 'There was a problem. The Turks want to play games because it was not allowed to pass with so many passengers – sanitary rules and things like that. Somehow, we managed to arrange it' (HAH, 171.39).

Evidently, the issue was effectively mediated on the ships between the inspectors and the captains. On *Northland*, Almog described how, 'He [the inspector] was invited to the bridge by the captain and was given whiskey and tobacco according to the American tradition. And also cash in the sum of $10,000. The inspection people examined the certificates [passports and exit visas] right away without having any inspection. So, the sum of $10,000 was indeed a large sum for the bribery, but it was a tiny sum in comparison with if the ship had been stopped' (HAH, 4.51). 'The Turks inspected deck only – immigrants hid below' (HAH, 171.39).

No doubt Turkish Officials were well aware of the passengers and deliberately avoided inspecting below decks, but having boarded the ship and inspected the documents, could verify that the ship and been stopped and checked. Everything appeared 'above board'. Agami sent a message to the ships, 'Therefore, it is interesting that England has always claimed the legality of the Montreux pact and now the immigrants are passing the Dardanelles under this agreement and therefore there is no obligation on the part of Turkey' (HAH, Memo). Indeed, Turkey was neither obliged nor was it inclined to detain the ships. The Foreign Office

received inaccurate information that 'both ships passed through straits without stopping for sanitary inspection prescribed by Article 3 of Convention' (FO E 9011/84/31).

The Montreux Convention, rather than preventing their passage, protected Mossad ships in the Turkish Straits. No other pretext for halting the progress of the ship was accepted by the Turkish Government. The 'Turkish Secretary General said he pressed the competent department to 'find some trick'; for holding the ships even though they were in order under the Montreux Convention, but the authorities concerned were frankly afraid.' A further attempt to pressure Turkey to use International Convention for Safety at Sea failed, '…but Turkey is not a party to the convention. He said if they invoked the pretext of safety at sea it would not (repeat not) be logical to send them back into the Black Sea. Note: no country wants the ships as permanent residents!' (FO E 9107). Nor did Turkey (or Bulgaria) wish to comprise maritime conventions as 'the resulting damage to the principle of free navigation would have wide ramifications that would be difficult to control' (Ofer, 1990, p. 134).

A communication from Angora to the Cabinet corrected the earlier misinformation and reported that, on October 1, 'They were subjected to a sanitary visit at sea in the straits under the Montreux Convention, and Admiralty were informed by N.A. of their passage. Neither ship, therefore, put in at Turkish port; and port dues owed on previous voyage were paid by the shipping agent on September 27th afternoon, thus removing this ground for detention' (FO 371/52514).

Turkish pilots came on board that day and guided both ships to the Sea of Marmara. They crossed the sea during the night. In the morning, they entered the Dardanelles where again Turkish pilots boarded to guide them into the Mediterranean. '…and as we entered the Aegean, we found two British destroyers waiting to join us. The pilots left our ships and we were on our own, except for the two destroyers' (HAH, 4.51). At 1600 Moka from *Paducah* reported, 'We left Dardanelles. And at the opening a British destroyer waited and is now escorting us. Between us and the *Jewish State*, all things are ok' (HAH, C4/258). The destroyers kept a safe distance from the Aliyah Bet ships.

Setting the course for *Paducah*, Captain Patzert's description of the nautical chart he used to chart their course is compelling.

> *'Clicking on the chart room light, I unfolded American Chart 3923, Aegean Sea, Southern Sheet – one of the most beautiful of all charts. Some lover of Greek history must have made this chart, some romantic mariner who journeyed in spirit with Ulysses over these sea roads, for it contained for more information than the modern mariner required. Here were the modern names of many of the islands and, in italics, their ancient names. A profusion of details looked up at me from the: the names of tiny villages high on mountains, places no sailor ought to be concerned about. Old volcanoes, now sunk, their burning hearts filled with fathoms of salty water, while fishermen took the fish from the green depths over the crater.'*
>
> *'I thought of these fearsome monsters braved by Ulysses, and of the decidedly less fanciful but very real dangers faced by us. For us, not the giant Cyclopes but an empire grown old, struggling to keep what it had; not Erebus and the danger of Scylla and Charybdis, ancient destroyers, but the struggle of modern empires. Our passage, I thought, was more perilous that Ulysses' voyage among the ancient myths. With rule and pencil, I drew our course – through Doro Strait and down through Zea Channel, ancient Keos Channel, toward Palestine'.*
>
> – Captain Rudy Patzert, 1994, p. 136.

The *Northland* followed closely behind. So did the two destroyers.

SURVEILLANCE

The British Consular Representative, Bennett, in Sophia seemed resigned. 'I'm afraid it's almost impossible to stop this traffic from the Black Sea' (FO E 9158/66). Despite the prospect of further traffic from behind the Iron Curtain and the impending surrender of the Mandate, the British Government continued to expend considerable military and intelligence resources on the Palestine Patrol. The Royal Navy was a reluctant participant. The Admiralty protested that destroyers were not appropriate ships for territorial waters and that a fleet of small ships should be used instead, but an 'Extreme shortage of naval manpower means the Navy could not staff those small ships' (FO 371/52514). In the end, the Admiralty took on both surveillance and interception roles, but at a cost to its other operations. Stewart states that the 'Royal Navy had used up their fuel allocation for 1947 in the first six months due to Palestine Patrol' (Stewart, 2002, p. 29).

Figure 54. Surveillance Photos, c. September – October 1947.
Source: Hagana Archives, Tel Aviv.

Royal Air Force (RAF) support for the Palestine Patrol began in 1946. 'Daily routine searches for shipping suspected of carrying illegal immigrants are now carried out by Warwick aircraft which carry radio equipment for guiding HM ship to intercept. In addition, when a report is received that suspect ships are believed to be approaching the Palestine coast, the Warwick searches are augmented by fighter patrols involving sometimes 20 or 30 sorties a day' (FO 371/52513 E3009). RAF planes reportedly buzzed *Northland* just 10 feet above the mast. In 1945, the question was posed to the Cabinet, 'Why cannot the Palestine government run these US Captains and crews in and give them a good stiff term of prison' (FO E1587).

Although they were in possession of false identities, crewmembers were not pirates, not aboard an enemy ship, nor otherwise subject to sanctions until they had acted in such a way as to transgress maritime law. The Foreign Office understood this. 'Prosecution of crews REQUIRES that the ships be intercepted within territorial waters' (FO 371/52514). The Royal Navy ships shadowing *Northland* and *Paducah* included CID [Criminal Investigation Department] men. Their primary purpose was to identify foreign crew with a view to capturing and imprisoning them at interception. 'The civil police are cooperating with the military regarding the investigations about the immigrants on the ships. Apparently, they are looking for specific people known to the CID. Intelligence has received the list of sailors on the *Jewish State* [*Northland*] but so far it's not known from whom they got it, but chances are it will get known to us. The original was destroyed' (HAH, 5/623/80). By 1947, captured foreign crewmembers were sentenced to as much as ten years in

jail, alongside captured Mossad personnel. The slik in the forward water tank on *Northland* could prevent that from happening.

While they were on route, the British Foreign Office continued its efforts to block the ship from reaching Palestine waters. It made multiple demands that Panama withdraw registration from the two ships. Had it been successful, the lack of a flag would have enabled lawful interception of *Northland* on the high seas. On September 30th, the Panamanian Counsel in London referred the matter to its Minister in Paris who was of the opinion the Panamanian government was reluctant to take immediate steps 'due to an alleged boycott suffered by our ships in territorial waters and sea-ports of the United Kingdom' (FO E 9082). The *Northland* retained both registry and the flag. The Royal Navy tried a different kind of interference to divert the course of the ships.

For the first time, the navy attempted to break communications between the ships and shore handlers. 'The trip took 7 or 8 days, after two days there was a very interesting incident. I think it was the first time in history that the British started to interrupt our communications and they wanted to break our contact with the country. Luckily enough, that day, we were in touch with two places [Marseille and Italy]. From that day, for some reason, they decided to break our communication and they just decided to use a stronger transmitter, and they were very close and they started to call over our signal to Marseille. Of course, after they were a lot stronger, but they were not able to break the connection. They sent an urgent telegram to Marseille. And we yelled…know it's not us, it's them, the British. After that we did not have contact with Marseille, but the destroyer did for 12-24 hours. As far as we know, Marseille did not know'. Then, 'they replied that it could not be deciphered. Which was because they did not have our code. We replied, 'look at what is written'. They wanted an answer just to be on the safe side. Italy eventually understood and they left us alone. After 6 or 7 hours, we got another message from Italy and Marseille that our telegrams could not be deciphered. So, for 2 days, we had no contact. Eventually they understood what was going on. This was a new thing for the British to do' (HAH, 171.39). The Mossad, too, was planning a move to evade capture.

Mossad concocted a tactic to retain control of the *Paducah* and crew by transferring its passengers to *Northland* while at sea in International Waters. If successful, the

Paducah would return to Burgas to embark more of the remaining 50,000 emigrants holding transit visas to as part of the deal with Romania and Bulgaria.

TRANSFER ATTEMPT

On September 29th, exchanges between the Palestine shore operations and the two ships centered on the plan to transfer passengers from *Paducah* to *Northland*. It's not clear exactly how they planned to accomplish getting 1330 people from one ship to the other, but the discussion centered on where and when the transfer ought to take place. On shore operations ordered the ships to make the transfer 150 miles west of Cyprus and near a shore, not in the open sea. The ships were to immediately communicate their plan and geographic position for the transfer. The *Paducah* replied they were ready to transfer at any time and would try 200 miles away from 'the country' (HAH, 4/258).

The *Northland's* communications were more cautious, saying 'We are doing everything possible for a transfer'. At this point, they still had the company of two destroyers nearby. Almog decided to attempt the transfer at midnight 130 miles from the Palestine coast, presumably because darkness might help avoid detection. The *Paducah* requested instructions as to where they should go afterwards, as food, fuel and water provisions were all running low. A request from Palestine operations to exchange commanders as part of the operation was rejected, as 'work does not allow' (HAH, 4/258).

As preparations progressed, timing became more urgent. A message from Agami to both ships directed them to 'Set the transfer earlier as soon as possible since other destroyers are leaving Haifa. Notify us about the time of transfer. If successful, transfer maximum number of gentiles to *Paducah*' (HAH, 4/258). Alskog's reply conveys anxiety about the Royal Navy's possible response. 'What should we do in case the vessels are overtaken while the transfer is taking place?' 'In that case, stop', Agami replied'. 'If the transfer succeeds, on the *Northern*[82] to go to shores of Tel Aviv north of the Red house and to anchor 200 meters away. Should you face

[82] Mossad's code name for the *Northland* was (not particularly cryptically) 'Northern.'

interruptions, and there will be danger for loss, you stop the evasion. If you cannot make it to TA [Tel Aviv] turn to KA'. At 01:30 the *Paducah* messaged that the transfer was about to begin. And then: 'The *Northern* cannot accept our people, you'll get an explanation from them. Make sure to listen all the time' (HAH, 4/258). Despite quiet seas, the transfer attempt was halted.

Almog explained the failure: 'We cannot perform the transfer. We have 1000 people standing, there is no room to embark even half of the people.' Agami queried, 'Didn't you know in advance about the inability to transfer and the crowdedness. Do everything in your power to make it happen' (HAH, 4/258). Then the destroyers started to close in. A *New York Times* article headlined, 'Destroyers Hunt 2 Refugee Ships,' reported that 'Six British destroyers raced out of Haifa today to intercept two Jewish refugee ships from the Black Sea that Royal Air Force planes were tracking continuously in the waters between Cyprus and Palestine. Three other destroyers were ordered to stand by in Haifa' (*New York Times*, 1 October 1947, p. 15).

Evasive Action

A toast to the lads that took up the fight
And made it their peoples' Trafalgar;
They turned each frail ship to a mailed man-o'war;
The ship is of steel – it will Persist
- Nathan Altman, 1946 (*to an Italian Captain*)

Half way around Crete, the instructions were received from the country [Palestine] to separate the ships onto different courses. 'Malach'[83] was to aim for Haifa and the 'Northern' for Tel Aviv. 'The aim to was to get us to the coast. A few hours after the split, reinforcements of the British warships came and *Northern* was escorted by four. As we neared the country we operated our defenses to prevent the British from a quick takeover of the ship, as it was very common in those days. Although it was clear to me that it will be hard to prevent the British takeover of the ship, we decided to make it hard for them and to try to gain time with the goal to reach the

[83] Mossad code name for the *Paducah.*

beach and get out' (HAH, 4.51). 'Despite the 'ominous threat' of being followed by as many as seven warships, and the crowded conditions, our charges were in good spirits' (Ben-tzur, 2015, online). Agami sent instructions to 'Notify regularly about the actions of the enemy in detail' (HAH, 4/258). At 12:21 he sent an update: 'The destroyers are nearing and preparing for attack' (HAH, 4/258).

PAUSE IV SUMMARY

In this moment, *Northland's* participation in the assemblage of Aliyah Bet was realized as a mobile 'human cargo' container vessel, literally advancing the Mossad's political mission of delivering a people (mostly reluctant Zionists) to a place (contested Palestine) to establish a new, Jewish, state. Thus underway on its core mission, the ship continued to maintain apparent 'above board' compliance with maritime law and conventions, thus eluding friction and resisting immobility. Indeed, the ship affordance of mobility specific to the maritime operational context are most prominent here and vitally expressed through power to pass.

That is, power to transit through geographical straits, avoid material hazards, evade diplomatic pressures and confront regulatory requirements. The latter could have had the effect of preventing the ship's passage but in actually abetted its escape. The engines of *Northland* provided necessary material propulsion; judiciously applied US dollars smoothed friction points; and alignment with the self-interests of Soviet, Romanian, Bulgarian and Turkish Governments saw oppositional diplomatic machinations thwarted. British power over the ship's mobility was effectively impotent outside the mandate territory and was primarily embodied in the Royal Navy that found its operations constrained by the same maritime conventions that served to protect the Aliyah Bet ships' mobility. However, the navy destroyer that shadowed the two ships provided a constant threat and reminder that the British Government intended to prevent disembarkation in Palestine.

Captain Rudy Patzert's referenced 'American Chart 3929' has proved impossible to locate. Neither the US Maritime archivist in Washington, D.C. nor the experts at the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich could find any mention of it. Inquiries to maritime chart antiquaries went similarly unrewarded. Whether or not the chart

ever existed, the evocative passage in his memoire encapsulates so much about how he understood the power imbalance implicit in the Aliyah Bet mission. Invoking the god-sent Siren and Cyclops, obstructers of Ulysses' voyage, Patzert described an asymmetrical power struggle between the Zionists and Great Britain over Palestinian futures.

Without the referenced chart, but finding the description highly affective, I created a collage using manual and digital techniques to explore ideas the passage triggered. HMS *Cheviot* embodies the strength and determination of Cyclops, a powerful mono-eyed giant that could hurl enormous stones down upon a passing ship from high upon a mountainside. Sirens perch on naval mines left strewn about the Mediterranean Sea; Flotsam and jetsam primed to harm the ship, its naïve and unwary sailors and their passengers. RAF surveillance places menace from above. And while the ship passes onwards, the 1939 White Paper is surrendered and the U.N. debates the Partition Plan.

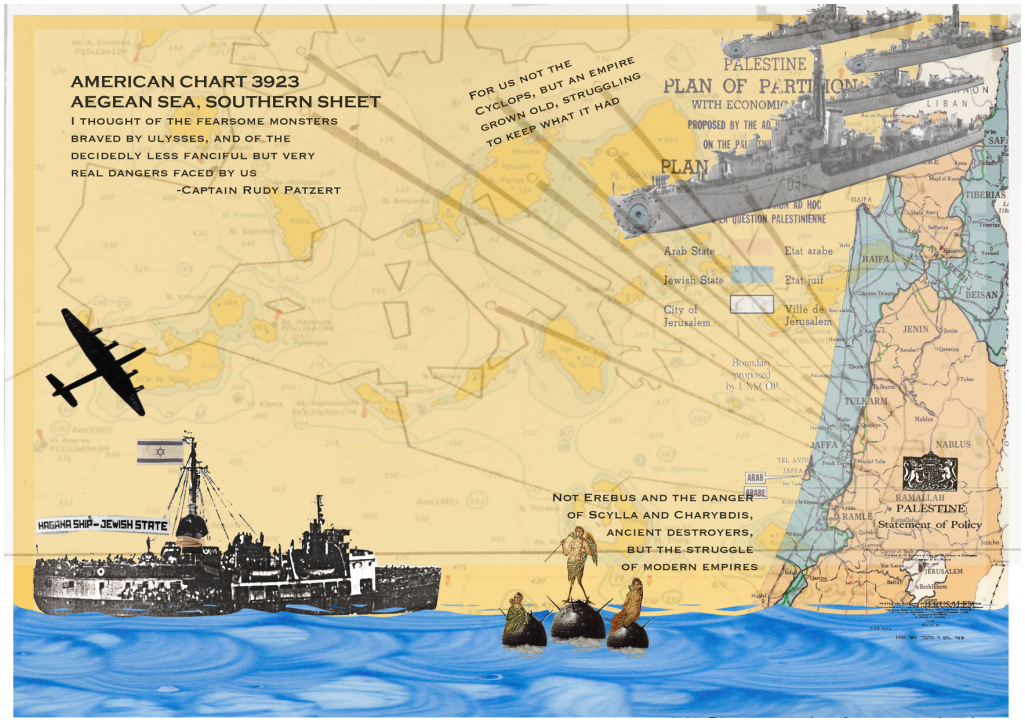


Figure 55. (Imagined) American Chart 3923.
Source: Author Work (Collage). Created 2018.[84]

[84] Collage element sources: *Northland/Medinat* and RAF plane, Palmach archives; *HMS Cheviot*, *Cheviot* Association; Quote, Patzert, 1994, pp. 135-6; Jewish Immigration map, United States Holocaust Museum; 1939 White Paper, (UK) National Archives; Partition Map, United Nations; Sirens, National Archaeological Museum, Greece; Water, author print.

As Patzert consulted his chart and the merchant crew set course and sailed the vessel, passenger movement on *Northland's* extremely crowded above and below deck spaces were tightly managed by the Mossad crew which instituted twice-daily shipboard rotations to provide access to air, to toilets and food. Helpfully, the seas were calm and weather remained mild. Even so, the ambition to transfer *Paducah's* passengers to *Northland* was thwarted by that same crowding. Despite the stable, robust structure of the ship, there was simply not enough deck space to facilitate the transfer. They discovered the limit of its material malleability.

PALESTINE PAUSE V: ADVANCING

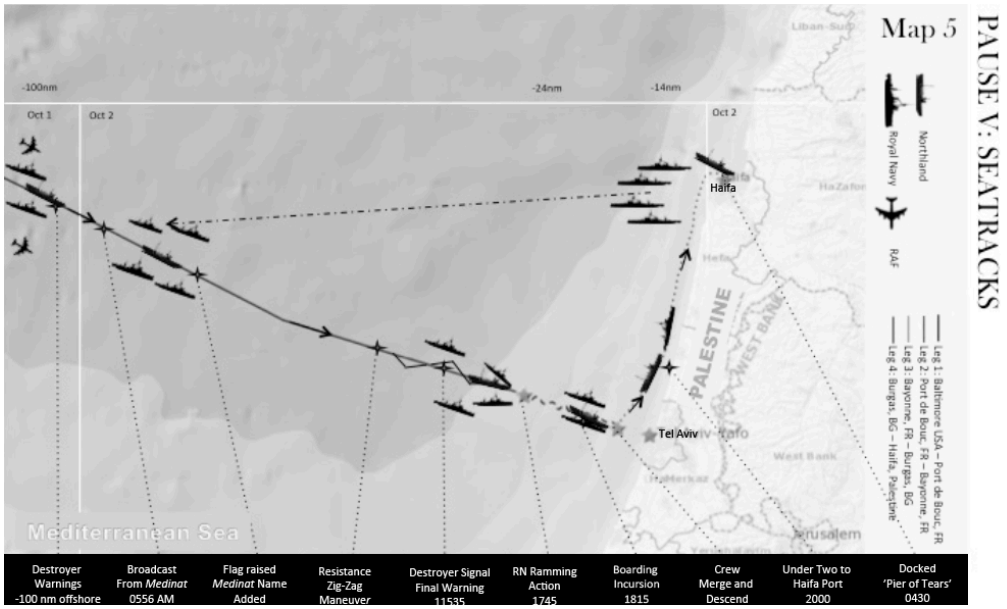


Figure 56. Palestine Pause Map 5: Approaching Palestine.
Source: Author. Created 2017.

The message from the Northern came in, 'The destroyers have turned to the ships and are using search lights. Probably they suspect something' (HAH, 4/258). Indeed, anticipation, conjecture and suspicion drove move and countermove between opponents in the final hours of *Northland's* attempt to penetrate the blockade. Each had forecast heightened potential for violence as a result of the *President Warfield/Exodus 1947* incident, the quality and speed of these 'new' ships, and rumors they carried weapons on board along with the immigrants.

'There is not evidence to suggest that firearms will be used, except perhaps by individuals who draw a gun in the heat of the moment. This latter possibility is greater than in the past because the Illegal organisers have now begun to make use of American volunteer crews – young and fiery men who remember that one of their number, the mate of PRESIDENT WARFIELD, was killed on interception' (FO 1052/82).

The recent spectacle of the *Exodus 1947,* and in particular the refoulement policy used against its passengers, was an undeniably serious public relations disaster for the British Government. Some observers have marked it as the Rubicon incident that marked the end of the Mandate, whatever the result of the deliberations in the Unite Nations. That incident also reverberated in the micro-geometries of the

encounters between the RN, *Northland* and *Paducah*. RN officers and sailors and Hagana ship crews and passengers were all well aware of what had happened to their equivalents on *Exodus*. However, it did not mean they understood one another's intentions.

Both the British Government and the Hagana were concerned about the violent effect such awareness might trigger during interception and boarding action. A Foreign Office assessment stated, 'It needs no arguing on the event of the past fortnight that refoulement admits of no compromise between Britain and the Zionists. Jewish reactions to the PRESIDENT WARFIELD incident suggest that when a policy of resistance is decided upon, such resistance will be ugliest, bitterest and most potentially dangerous where those concerned feel that the price of defeat is return to Europe. Refoulement has brought much graver possibilities into interception' (MB 01415/47).

REFOULEMENT

Moving operations to the Black Sea, behind the Iron Curtain, did not eliminate the prospect of refoulement. Although Mossad believed that it had the support of the Bulgarian and Soviet Governments, making it impossible to send the passengers back, it could not be sure the British Government would not attempt it. On September 30, Agami messaged the ships, 'We let you know that is seems the villains turned to the Bulgarian and Roumanian governments so they would take back the immigrants of Malach and Northern. What do you know about it? You probably took care in advance for a proper reaction?' (HAH, 4/258).

As *Northland* and *Paducah* began their journey, the Cabinet Office Special Committee on Illegal Immigration was investigating the feasibility of implementing refoulement policy but faced several significant challenges. First, the embarkation country would have to accept the returned immigrants. Second, by what means could they actually return them to Bulgaria? The Montreux Convention once again proved a barrier to British objectives: Article 2 limited the passage of military vessels (during peacetime) through the Turkish Straits to ships belonging to Black Sea countries. The committee queried a maritime law expert as to whether a corvette

could be used, if it had not actually seen battle. The reply: No, it could not. The *Northland*, decommissioned and under civilian ownership, was not subject to the same restriction. In any case, before refoulement could be accomplished, the ship would have to be captured.

FORMIDABLE VESSELS

The characteristics that prompted the purchase of the 'beautiful, big ship' *Northland* generated corresponding concern on the British side. Even before the purchase was confirmed, MI5 reported 'You will no doubt be aware from the Weekly List of Suspect Ships that the use of vessels even more formidable than the PRESIDENT WARFIELD must be expected in future' (ADM 4/BM/2211). Then, as *Northland* began its new operational purpose, 'It is certain that the two large ships [Northland and Paducah] to be expected in the near future, if resolutely handled, will much more difficult proposition than was the PRESIDENT WARFIELD' (FO 1052/82).

Although *Northland* was a 'low road' ship, in terms of the 'shadow fleet,' it was in far better condition and faster than its predecessors. In addition to noting its material robustness, there was concern as to what, in addition to immigrants, the ship might be transporting to Palestine. The Hagana was engaged in weapons acquisition and smuggling at the time but had assiduously separated those activities from the clandestine immigrant project. British intelligence suspected otherwise.

MI5, as part of a discrediting campaign, spread rumors that the ships were now carrying weapons. Agami sent an urgent message to both ships: '…they claim that you have weapons. Provocation may happen. Even if there are single pistols. Do whatever you can to prevent use of weapons. If any weapons, hide them in slik' (HAH, 4/258). Hagana was concerned that RN crews might believe the rumors and react disproportionately to shipboard resistance during boarding action. And they knew, as Hadari comments, 'American Jews could handle firearms' (Hadari, 1991, p. 113). This meant the naval boarding parties might take on new risks when intercepting Aliyah Bet vessels, due to their size and speed and the potential for armed resistance.

Responding to these factors, the Admiralty secured the Cabinet Office's Special Committee on Illegal Immigration's (COSCII) permission to give the RN First Officer in Command powers of discretion to call off boarding. The C of C communicated the change in policy but cautioned that '…loss of prestige to the Navy and encouragement to the Jews in general and the organizers of the traffic in particular, must be kept in mind. Commanding Officers must not therefore be lightly diverted from the object unless the 'illegal' is unboardable due to obstructions or the risks very great' (ADM 4/BM/2211).

'My present instructions to COMPAL and the Palestinian patrol are to go all out to overcome resistance and seize the ships. In view however of the foregoing appreciation and the impending departure of NORTHLANDS and PADUCAH, powerful ships likely to get fitted for resistance, I am reluctantly contemplating giving the Senior Officer present discretion to hold off if in his opinion the operation is likely to entail appreciable casualties and serious damages to ships or a failure, which would have a worse effect than no boarding at all' (FO 1052/82). Instructions to the Hagana ship commanders likewise counseled caution.

RESISTANCE

The Communication Log documents an escalating and emphatic focus on avoiding bloodshed, while holding fast to the intention to beach the ship near Tel Aviv. That objective mandated continued control of the ships. On September 30, Alskog received instructions to, 'Resist the take-over of the ships and turning away from the shores of the country. Stop the resistance if there is a danger to lives on your end'. Later the same day 'Should you face interruptions, and there will be danger for loss, you stop the evasion'. October 1, the instructions became more precise, 'Fear of the provocative behavior on the part of the enemy if you resist on the sea. Therefor you have to passively resist'. October 2, the day of the interception, 'The instructions you received this morning regarding passive resistance is absolute. Confirm immediately, clearly, reception of the instruction' (HAH, 4/258). Radio operator Aharon Michaeli recalled that, 'All this happened shortly after the arrival of the '*Exodus*' and the bloody battle that had taken place on that ship in the port of Haifa. This time our orders from the Hagana were, 'Passive resistance only'' (HAH, 171.21).

Forces were converging on the two Aliyah Bet ships. The *Palestine Post* reported that 'RAF planes were tonight reported to have sighted two blockade runners approaching the Palestine coast'. Bernard Wallis, a sailor on the RN ship HMS *Cheviot*, noted in his diary that the *Cheviot* had relieved 'Hayden' to shadow *Northland* beginning on September 29. As the convoy neared Palestine, *Cheviot* sped ahead at 27 knots to Haifa, and '…arrived at 1130, & tied up alongside oiling jetty. Discharged draft & stores & embarked trailer pump for boarding purposes. Slipped at 1615, anchored. Proceeded to sea at 2230 in company with 'Chequers', 'Childers' St. Austell' & 'Vernon Bay' (Wallis, 1947, Diary entry). Back to sea to intercept the two ships.

MEDINAT HA'YEHUDIM RAISES STAR OF DAVID

On *Northland*, Almog recalled, 'As we neared the country we operated our defenses to prevent the British from a quick takeover of the ship as it was very common in those days. Although it was clear to me that it will be hard to prevent the British takeover of the ship, we decided to make it hard for them and to try to gain time with the goal to reach the beach and get out' (HAH, 4.51). The *Northland's* outward defenses included a curtain of barbed wire it had taken on board in Baltimore. Lifeboat davits were to be used to defend against ramming action 'Should the enemy interfere with the evasion *Northern* should take out the booms stop the ramming if there is any danger for the people or the ship'. The crowd of human beings crammed together on deck would also serve as a deterrent to boarding. This was essentially a military battle for access to the coast and for public sentiment both in Palestine and abroad.

For Mossad and Hagana, the objective of reaching the shore and getting the immigrants off the ships and dispersed to safe locations was the primary objective. 'The navy covers the entire Med sea and coastal waters and are using radar so there is no hope the ships will get to shore without being detected. It is hoped that the immigrants will change their minds when they hear about the means of the Navy' (HAH, 80/623/5). As the ships approached Palestine, a campaign of persuasion began. The timing of these communications was tied directly to calculations of the

speed and boardability of the ships. Wallis diary notes that on October 2, HMS *Cheviot* 'Rendezvoused with illegals at 0630' (Wallis, 1947, Diary Entry).

Sometime that morning, *Northland* became the *Medinat ha'Yehudim*, the Jewish State. The *Paducah* became the *Ge'ula* (Redemption). Eddy Kaplansky remembered that they 'Raised the star of David flag and tied a banner across the flying bridge bearing the new name of our ship in Hebrew and English' (Ben-tzur, 2015, online). There is no mention of a ritual to placate Poseidon, the sea deity who thought to take umbrage at such changes[85]. The phrase Medinat ha'Yehudim is a Hebrew translation of 'Der Judenstaat' – The Jewish State, the title of the 1896 tract by Theodor Herzl generally understood as the foundation document for modern Zionism. The Star of David flag was adopted at the first Zionist Congress held in Basel in 1897. The act of adding this particular name (in both English and Hebrew) and hoisting the Zionist flag, as the ship maintained course for the coast anticipated the imminent partition of Palestine and the reification of a Jewish state.

Figure 57. *Medinat ha'Yehudim, c.* 1947.
Source: Palyam Archives, Tel Aviv.

Given *Northland's* speed and strength, the navy calculated that '…to prevent any reaching the shore, boarding operations needed to start before the 3-mile limit, in practice one mile offshore for every knot of which an illegal vessel was capable' (Stewart, 2002, p. 89). C of C Med wrote to First Sea Lord, 'Another aspect of

[85] In seafaring tradition, the changing of a ship name is thought to be unlucky. A ceremony to inform and placate the god Poseidon may be carried out prior to the name change to ward off bad luck.

boarding these stronger and faster illegals fitted for resistance is that, as you know, the job has to be started well outside the 3-mile Limit. Much play was made of this by the propagandists on board in the 'broadcast' that continued for the duration of the operation' (FO 1052/82).

RACE FOR SHORE

For *Northland* with a top speed of 10 knots, boarding would need to begin at least 30 nautical miles offshore. Almog observed that, 'Apparently, the British assessment was in there, and at a distance of 100 nautical miles from the beach, they started to take over the ship. It was started by solicitation as they are nearing the ship every time in a combat formation and speaking in languages that are known to the passengers [Yiddish, Romanian and Hebrew]. Negotiating with the command of the ship to tow the ship to Haifa. They tried to persuade us for 14 hours' (HAH, 4.51)

'We continued to move toward the coast with the destroyer alongside us and the lights of Tel Aviv were seen in the distance as evening descended' (HAH, 4.51). Eddie Abadi, at the wheel, recalled 'The battle turned into a race for the shore' (Ben-tzur, 2015, online). The Royal Navy command knew interception in international waters would be a violation of maritime law. 'The powers of the Palestine authorities to confiscate vessels carrying illegal immigrants and to deal with their masters and crews can be exercised only when vessels are intercepted within the three-mile limit' (FO 371/5254).

'Interception on the high seas is legally possible only in the case of ex-enemy countries'. 'Legally action could only be taken in respect of ships flying ex-enemy flag, i.e. Italy, Hungary, Roumania and Bulgaria, and in those cases only until peace treaties are signed. Ships of Allied or neutral flag could not be intercepted on the high seas' (FO 371/5254). The memo suggests that ships could be stopped and boarded to verify if they were flying 'false colours' and were in fact 'enemy ships' and possibly confiscated. This option had ceased two years prior once the Emergency Powers (Defence) Act expired in February 1945 (CO 76021/45).

'When talking did not help, they sprayed streams of water on the decks as well as tear gas. Then they tried to tie up alongside us, but we managed to maneuver to

prevent them from so doing' (HAH, 4.51). 'The British prepared to board 'The Jewish State' while it was still well within international waters. Eddie maneuvered to hard left and hard right until he managed to collide into one of the ships, which crinkled like tin before the heavily plated former icebreaker' (Ben-tzur, 2015, online).

From the start of the Royal Navy Patrols in 1945, two Hagana ships succeeded in reaching shore. In 1946, the *Marie* (*Hanna Szensh*) and the *Susanna* (*Shabtai Lusinsky*) sailed from Italy with just over 1,000 passengers between them and managed to land on the Palestine coast. The *Athina*, from Yugoslavia, sank that same year with 815 on board. Apart from these three, the Royal Navy intercepted all the 37 Aliyah Bet ships that set course for the shore. Despite these odds, Mossad and Almog were determined to beach *Medinat ha'Yehudim* if at all possible. '*Every time* there was an attempt to beach the ship, even with the *Exodus*. They had everything waiting on shore - doctors, kitchen, everything' (Naor, 2017, Interview).

The *Northland's* ice-breaking bow and double steel hull were a factor as they had calculated how and where they could beach it without damaging the ship or injuring passengers. A telegram from shore to the ship titled 'Acre Police Readiness' stated that, 'Hagana made preparations to accept the immigrants in the Negev [code = Tel Aviv]. And the passengers are already prepared for that. The plan is to try and to face the shore and then transport the immigrants to boats. The call was recorded by Jaffa intelligence' (HAH, 80/623/5).

Onshore, both the Palmach (Hagana's armed fighting force) and the British Army made preparations should the ships managed to beach. 'A state of readiness was declared as of October 1 at 14:00 hours. It has to do with the news of the possibility of the immigrant ships will try to break through a point north of Haifa - Acra. The police in Acre had some notice and arrived with regard to the arrangements' (HAH, 80/623/5). The antagonists prepared for a physical encounter. In parallel, a discursive battle was fought to increase support for the creation of a Jewish state. 'Ben Gurion used to say that even the ships that got caught were good for the Jewish case' (Naor, 2017, Interview).

THE BROADCAST

Almog received a message at 0330, instructing him to start transmitting in 5-minute intervals on frequency 8488, beginning at 0500 on October 1. The transmission would be broadcast on the Hagana radio station. He was to name the ship, say what is happening and transmit general background noise, and close with a song, Hatikvah, Hazakna or a partisan song. 'Make sure you transmit in English'. He could call for solidarity but not for a public demonstration, 'as it hadn't been agreed upon' (HAH, 4/258). The next day, a prepared script was to be read over the transmitter at 6AM on October 2nd, before the expected interception would likely take place.[86] As with the flag and the added name '*Medinat ha'Yehudim*,' the broadcast was another tactic to reify a future nation state from offshore. One of the closing lines simply declared, 'We are an integral part of the forthcoming Jewish State'.

The transmission began at 5:56 AM, relayed by the Hagana's radio station and 'picked up by radios in private homes and loudspeakers set up in the streets of Tel Aviv by the resistance movement' (JTA, 1947). The script began, *'We, the immigrants on this boat the Medinat ha'Yehudim turn to the United Nations, to the Jewish settlements'.* It then recounts the tragedies that had resulted from the Nazi genocide and appealed for the immigrants right to settle in Palestine. 'We want to return and build our homes again. We want to be gathered in the land of Israel' (HAH, 80/623/5).

The script rejects the idea of extending the (or any) Mandate, 'It will not be foreigners that establish the state, but only Jews, and urges the UN to use its 'moral and political power to clear the obstacles that the British Government has laid in our path, remove the blockade that the Mandate has laid on the shores of the Land of Israel, in order to enable us to do the things we must do'. 'We know the British can harm us. We did not imagine after the fall of Nazism that they would keep fighting us with Nazi methods. Now we find ourselves deported and killed as if Nazism was never defeated. Does the world deny us? Does the UN deny us? We are an integral

[86] See full transcript Appendix B.

part of the forthcoming Jewish state' (HAH, 80/623/5). The broadcast ended and the HMS *Cheviot* 'Rendezvoused with the illegals at 0630' (Wallis, 1947, Diary entry) approximately 300 nm from Tel Aviv.

> *'The enemy usually enters at night. He will try to ram you and take you over'.*
>
> – HAH, 4/258.

Four navy ships converged in battle formation on *Northland/Medinat ha'Yehudim:* HMS *Cheviot*, HMS *Chidlers*, HMS *St. Austell Bay* and HMS *Veryan Bay*. When the interception attempt began at 1807, the *Medinat* was 15 miles offshore from Tel Aviv. '…we saw they meant to get forcefully on board the ship and we started activating our defense. The British naively did not assess enough what would be expected from the behavior of a ship of this kind. And this is why they made their attempt to board the way they did with other ships' (HAH, 4.51). The crew followed the pre-set plan to prevent the intruders from gaining control and make way towards land. 'Use tricks, do not provoke and let the soldiers on board. But save control over the wheel. Go south and try to get near the beach. If you cannot get up on the shore of Tel Aviv, move toward Haifa and get on the beach of KA' (HAH, 4/258).

Through experience, the Royal Navy had developed tactics for intercepting and taking command of Aliyah Bet ships. Each suspect ship was evaluated for its innate challenges (such height of freeboard relative to a destroyer's deck), the prospect of effective defensive installations (such as barbed wire), and likelihood of violent resistance. The first action was to stop the ship 'dead in the water', usually by ramming it with one or more destroyers. Once the ship's progress was halted, it would be boarded and control wrested from the crew.

Participants in Royal Navy 'boarding parties' were trained at the Palestine Patrol base in Malta. In his report on the interceptions, the Commander in Chief (C of C) of the Mediterranean Fleet commended the operation. 'The success of the boarding operation is largely dependent on the ability of the boarding party in getting over a large body at the first moment of impact; subsequently it depends on their courage, resourcefulness and good temper in the face of a determined and provocative opposition…their behavior and forbearance in the face of heavy odds won the day in all these operations' (Stewart, 2002, p. 175).

Boarding platforms were custom designed and built for each ship. During boarding action, the platform was swung out from the destroyer over the target ship's deck. The boarding party then jumped from the platform onto the deck of the immigrant ship. Mossad knew the procedures and prepared accordingly.

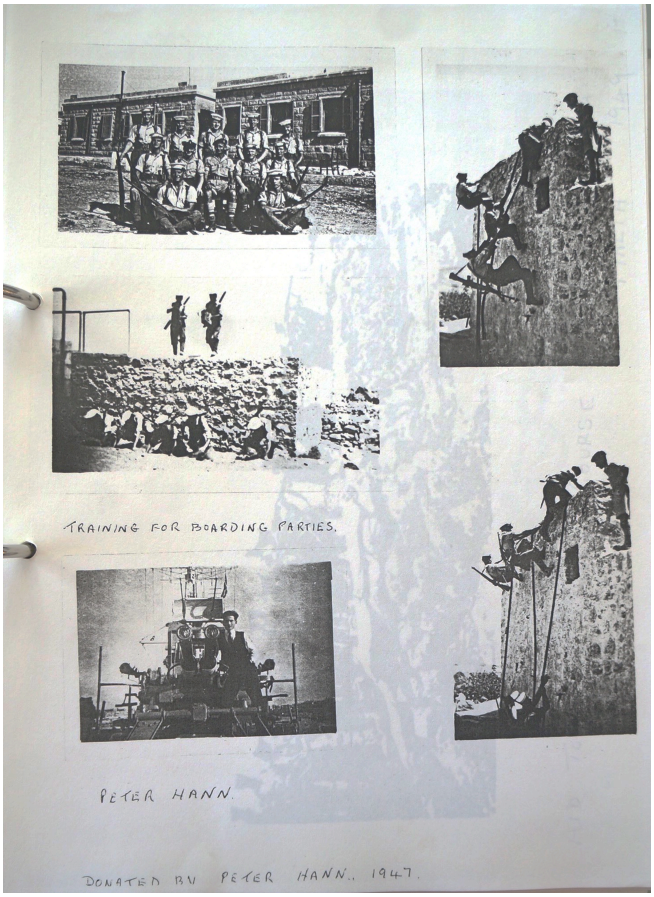


Figure 58. Boarding Party Training on Malta RN Base, c. 1945-1947.
Source: *Cheviot* Association Album, Devon.

Both civilian and Mossad commanders of the Medinat maintained confidence in the ship to withstand ramming action. Almog remembered, 'They came with a combat formation and tried to embark soldiers on it, but since we knew the ship as far as stability was concerned, its strength, we interrupted them and every now and then we changed the course of the ship and broke their maneuver since they had to change their formation to avoid a crash. When it didn't work, they sprayed us with water [canon] and tear gas' (HAH, 4.51).

Wallis noted in his diary, that on the *Cheviot*, they 'Donned gas masks, etc. and used thunderflashes, gas bombs, screams and hoses' (Wallis, 1947, Diary entry). Almog's recollection is that the *Cheviot* 'Tried to tie up alongside, but we kept maneuvering

to avoid being boarded. Tried again, and they turned bow of Medinat into a destroyer on port side [HMS *Cheviot*], and damaged it, but the starboard side destroyer [HMS *Pelican*] managed to board marines and captured the bridge' (HAH, 4.51)

Michaeli said, 'Approaching us was very difficult for them, although they had four destroyers. The immigrants were above to prevent them from jumping on. They took out ladders and contraptions so they could jump on board' (HAH, 171.21). In a message to Agami on shore, 'We stopped the course, broke the machines. They are going to board the ship. We told them we are not defending ourselves because of the huge number of babies' (HAH, 4/258). There were injuries, though. A British bullet hit American volunteer Irving Metzler just as the boarding began. It passed through the back of his scalp, missing his brain by inches (Machal, Metzler).

Resistance continued. The ship moved forward. The crew sabotaged the bridge controls and removed the door handles to obstruct soldiers from entering. Ten of the crew descended through the engine hatch. The radio operators '…destroyed the good wireless equipment we had been using and hid somewhere with a small sender and a little generator. We maintained our contact in that manner' (HAH, 171.21). From the engine room, the crew continued to control the ship using the secondary bridge.

With one lookout on the starboard side and another on the port, two portholes provided limited visibility for the landward lurch. The lookouts tracked the destroyers' positions and relayed instructions back to the helmsman Abadi, steering blind from the enclosed engine room. The zigzag course that Eddie initiated from the bridge was continued from below. 'After two hours of effort around 8 PM, the British moved explosives experts to the ship and broke in forcefully by cutting the steel on the deck through the machine room and detaching the engine hatch. The ship was brought to a full stop. From here onward the ship was without any control and the British started towing it towards Haifa. It was about ten miles from the beach' (HAH, 4.51).

'When the British stopped the engines, the electricity on the ship was cut off. It was fed from the engines. As a result, the lighting stopped as well. We had to do a quick action and forcefully open the windows of the ship and get the people up onto the

decks, so they would not be suffocated. In this action a baby was crushed to death' (HAH, 4.51).[87] That baby's name was Havivah Stein and is listed as one of 'The Fallen' in the struggle for the Israeli state (HAH, 39/2016).

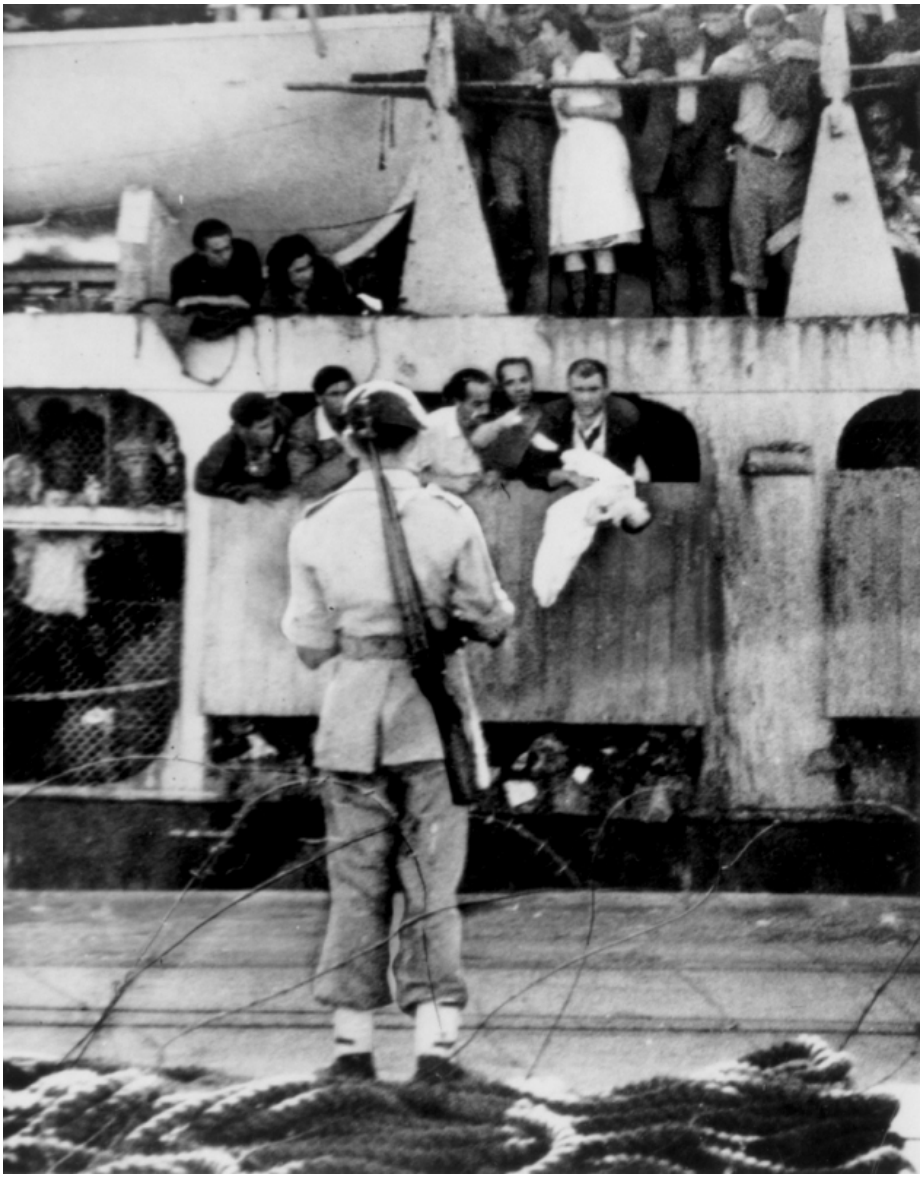


Figure 59. Refugee shows dead baby to British soldier at Haifa Port, October 3, 1947.
Source: US Holocaust Memorial Museum, New York.

Wallis' diary entry briefly recounts, 'We subsequently boarded the "Northerner" with very little resistance, the use of water making a considerable contribution to

[87] There are multiple accounts as to how the baby died: suffocated by tear gas, trampled in the panic following the gassing. The news of her death and the photo above were included in multiple news articles covering the incerception of the *Northland/Medinat*.

the quelling of any real resistance' (Wallis, 1947, Diary entry). True only if resistance is equivalent to fighting. But if resistance means continuing to deploy evasive tactics, then resistance on board continued even after the second bridge was commandeered.

Figure 60. Arriving Haifa

Northland/Medinat ha'Yehudim towed in to Haifa Port, 3 October 1947.
Source: Pathe film excerpt.

Soldiers Boarding *Northland/Medinat ha'Yehudim* in Haifa Port, 3 October 1947.
Source: Central Zionist Archives, Jerusalem.

> *'On the morning of 3 October 1947, we were towed [by HMS Talybont] to the port of Haifa and docked to the 'Pier of Tears, as it had been come to known through the poem 'To An Italian Captain' by Nathan Altman'.*
>
> - Yoske Almog, 1947, HAH, 4.51.

The *Northland/Medinat ha'Yehudim* arrived at approximately 0430. When the Medinat and the *Paudcah/Guelah* arrived on October 3, The Jewish Telegraphic Agency reported, 'The entire port area is overrun with troops, police, tanks and self-propelled artillery' (*JTA* 3 October 1947). The *New York Times* reported a similar scene the day before, 'Thousands of British troops, including the crack 'Red Devils' 6th airborne division, were standing guard in Haifa and around the harbor' (*New York Times,* 2 October 1947).

For the crew, there were two possible ways to escape detection and arrest for both Mossad and volunteer crew. Disappear into the crowd of passengers and pass as one of them or hide in the slik down below. Kaplansky recalled, 'We now assumed various guises to avoid being recognized as crew. I became Menachem Goldenberg with a 'wife' and family, one bearded sailor [Lou the atheist] became a rabbi

accompanied by several Talmudic scholars. Captain Morgan, a non-Jew, spoke only English was a deaf-mute with a guide (a sailor) at his side. Only several male passengers, in their twenties, were detained as suspected sailors' (Palmach, Kaplansky). Said Feig, 'Above we were immigrants, we stayed on ship as immigrants. General search for water. Everyone had a bucket, took mine and went down and escaped the British escort and got to the main switch and cut some wires. Again darkness. We were able to evade and escape up. Immigrants did not despair, they understood it was sabotage' (HAH, 171.39).

While Alskog also stayed above to deal with the passengers, the two radio operators and eight of the American volunteers hid in a slik. Ahraon Michaeli's testimony recalled, 'When we heard them coming to the back bridge and started looking for us we went down to the slik. The slik in that ship was in a 3 x 3 [meters] tank of water. We had divided the tank into four using walls and filled it with water to its half. We were not spotted. They let the ship into the harbor of Haifa. There were I, Shmulik Hormann and eight Americans' (HAH, 171.21). Almog's account says he went into the slik later, '…before the last of the immigrants left the ship' (HAH, 4.51).

The accounts of exactly who and how many people hid in the slik differ, but there were at least 10 and as many as 15 men self-interred in that space. They almost certainly would have had to use horizontal bunks to fit them all inside the tank. Michaeli recalled, 'We lay about 30 hours in the stash. It was very hot'. It was to Mossad's advantage that the British did not want to deploy any resources to cleaning the ships, which all acknowledged, were absolutely filthy. They used a Jewish firm instead. '…as they [British soldiers] left the ship, our people came and let us exchange our clothes with those of the people of "Solel Boneh" [the cleaning crew] who were working at the harbor' (HAH, 171.21). Abadi, the helmsman, recalled 'When freed, I stumbled into a British Officer who asked 'Was it awfully bad down there?'' (Ben-tzur, 2015, online). They all walked off the boat and into Haifa, where they were given fake IDs and hotel rooms until they could be smuggled out of Palestine.

The passengers and the disguised crewmembers were still on board. Refoulement had not yet been ruled out. 'It was not clear to the British or to us where the immigrants would be taken', said Almog. 'There were rumors that the British were planning to take the immigrants to camps in North Africa and since they declare that

they would not take more to Cyprus and return each ship to its port of origin, in this case there was no doubt they would not be able to return the immigrants to there' (HAH, 4.51). As with the *Exodus 1947*, there were not sufficient transport ships to ferry the passengers to Cyprus, and there were also rumors that the camps were unable to take in any more detainees.

'A Foreign Office spokesman declared that the disposition of each transport of "illegal" immigrants would be decided individually. He added that the government has been in touch with Bulgaria and Rumania on the question of the blockade-runners *Paducah* and *Northlands*, but did not reveal the attitude of the Balkan states' (*JTA*, 3 October 1947). The *Northland/Medinat ha'Yehudim's* passengers were kept on board for three days, presumably due to the refoulement deliberations and diplomatic efforts. In the end, they were deported to Cyprus along with the passengers from the *Paducah/Guelah*.

Palestine Pause V Summary

From the moment of *Northland's* purchase described in Pause I, the quest to reach the Palestinian shore was the apotheosis of the mission - what every other previous moment had been leading up to. In this pause, the Aliyah Bet assemblage made extensive use of the ship's material and mobility affordances to literally advance the cause of a new nation-state via the waters of the Mediterranean. It and the two crews delivered a Hatikvah-singing people to a longed-for place; a Zionist flag into Haifa port; and a bridge emblazoned with the appended name '*Hagana Ship The Jewish State, Medinat ha'Yehudim*', The successful interception by the Royal Navy was a victory of British waning power over the territory, but Mossad had literally nailed their colors to the mast.

The affixing of the banner over the bridge with the name *Medinat ha'Yehudim* was timed to coincide with the imminent contest over control of the ship. Predecessor Hagana ships had been given Hagana designations recognizing significant people, places and events in Jewish distant and recent history. This one was different. It imagined a near future Jewish State just as the UNO was debating the partition of Palestine. 'The personification of a ship through its given name is commonly intended to ennoble the vessel' (Voltalato, 2011, p. 87).

Almog was ordered 'to passively resist' the boarding party (HAH, 4/258), and this has important implications for 'power to.' The word 'resistance' carries with it an expectation of violence, but once the British forces came aboard, the crew and passengers were directed not to engage with violence. In this context, the command 'passive resistance', resistance is better understood in the material sciences sense of 'impedance', in which one material opposes the effect of another. The directive 'passive' was intended to avoid violence of the kind experienced on the *President Warfield/Exodus 1947*, but this did not translate to passivity with respect to relinquishing control over the vessel. Indeed, resistance took on a number of quite active forms during this moment. There was power in impedance.

Advancing the ship towards shore required thinking 'through the thing', via the ship's propulsive and material affordances. When the crew abandoned the bridge, they lashed the wheel and stuck the engines on full power, thus maintaining momentum towards shore. They removed door and hatch handles to impede access to the transgressors as they proceeded below decks to the secondary bridge and maintained directional control. The *Northland's* consistently heavy handling and awkward seakeeping characteristics strangely abetted the crew in their visually impaired maneuvers against the four destroyers.[88] Each course change presented a significant material risk to the naval ships.[89] Recall Almog's testimony 'since we knew the ship as far as stability was concerned, its strength, we interrupted them and every now and then we changed the course of the ship and broke their maneuver since they had to change their formation in order to avoid a crash' (HAH, 4.51).

Once the explosive experts broke through the doors, crewmembers secreted themselves in the water tank 'slik'. Although control of the ship's propulsion and direction had been wrested from the Aliyah Bet crew, via this act of claustrophobic concealment they evaded capture and afforded themselves the potential for future. This is a key moment in which the ship malleable materiality is expressed in the modifications that produced hidden cavities as opportunities for concealment and release. The records say only that a water tank was used but using the ship's blueprints I know that of the four water tanks on *Northland* only the forward most

[88] This might explain why the *Northland's* ship wheel remains on display in the Israeli Naval Museum in Haifa.
[89] HMS *Charity* and HMS *Chieftain* had been extensively damaged and rendered non-operational in the *President Warfield/Exodus 1947* incident (Liebreich, 2012, p. 239).

tank could have been large enough. Even that one, the largest, would have been a very tight fit for even 10 men.

To understand how this space of resistance might have been experienced, I built a partial model of the forward bow and created a 1:32 scale 3-D visualization of the ‘slik’.

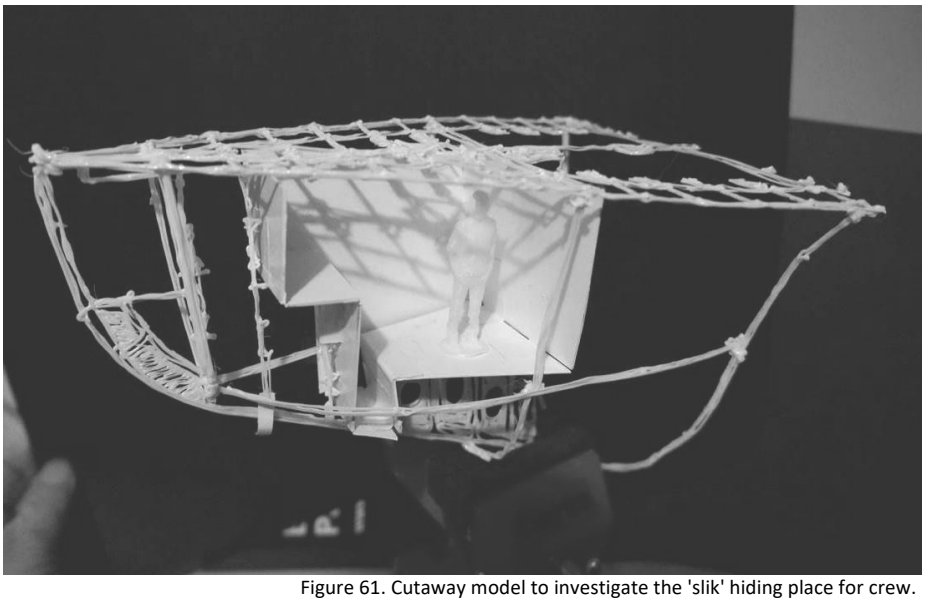


Figure 61. Cutaway model to investigate the 'slik' hiding place for crew.
Source: Author. Created 2017.

The photo below shows the model, merged into a photo of the ship, as it is being towed into the harbor, with 12 figures standing. This visualization conveys some sense of the power of spaces of concealment. And, of course, in that crowd on the decks, other crewmembers have blended in with the passengers and would avoid detection but not detention in Cyprus.

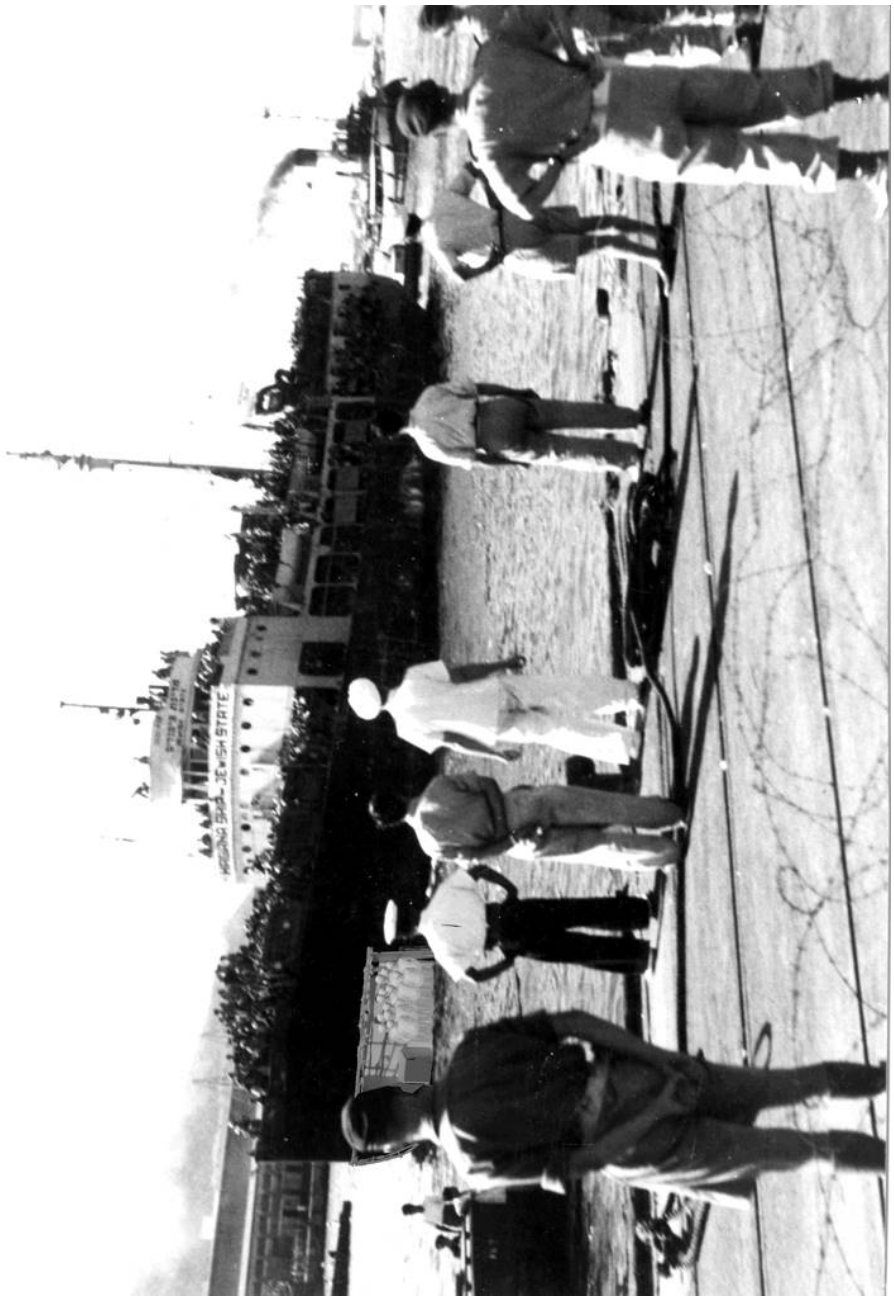


Figure 62. Arriving in Haifa 'slik' model overlaid on photograph.
Source: Author creative work based on photograph from
Palmach Museum and Archives, Tel Aviv.

PALESTINE CHAPTER CONCLUSION

Returning to the core research question, how do the moments explored in this chapter illuminate how a ship can participate in challenging state power? This account of *Northland's* engagement in the Aliyah Bet distributed assemblage demonstrates that the affordances of a ship can be active in an assemblage of human and non-human elements in more than one power production mode. That is,

Northland participated through aspects of its materiality, mobility and maritime operational capacities in ways that certainly challenged power, but arguably more importantly *em*powered its owner's Zionist mission.

It is important to revisit the almost taken-for-granted aspect of this participation emergent from the haecceities of a *ship*: of buoyancy and self-righting, seakeeping and sea motion, propulsion and power. At the most fundamental level, the political act of transporting Jewish immigrants from Europe to Palestine could only have been empowered via ships. Legal immigration was restricted by enforcement of the 1939 White Paper. Land routes were blocked effectively by border controls. The large number of immigrants required to achieve the objective of substantively increasing the Jewish population of Palestine necessitated relatively large ships to carry, in aggregate, tens of thousands of Jews. The Northland, one of dozens of these Hagana vessels, was elemental in this effort.

Mossad acquired the 'low-road' ship and re-imagined its operational mission and capacities, realizing improbable potential through adaptation and reconfiguration calculated to the limit of its material possibilities. Captain Davis' skepticism was a rational response to the proposition that the USCG Cutter *Northland* was also the *Medinat ha'Yehudim.* Tabor, the on-the-fly, self-taught naval architect, designed the adaptations such that the ship would retain stability even with a spectacular load of 'human cargo.' Maritime history is replete with repurposed and reconfigured ships, but I argue in this case it was the Mossad organization's seafaring naiveté combined with a vivid Zionist imagination that conjured up this incarnation of *Northland* as a crude but capable passenger ship.

This version of the ship internalized the Zionist mission. Missionization embedded and imbricated a robust corpus; lodged in the berth deck, heightened in the aft extension, protruded in the sea-slung toilets, drilled into the air vents, buried in the secret secondary bridge and secreted in the sliks designed to conceal objects and humans. With the ship thus primed, the maritime operational context (its natural habitat) provided the means to traverse the seas, embark people and circumvent the obstacles in its way.

The affordances derived from a ship's maritime operational attributes are generically attached to the object of the ship, but mediated by a vessel's category

designation, flag registration, and specific ship design and version as it relates to navigating the natural environment and man-made infrastructure (both on and off-shore). The *Northland's* transition from naval to civilian vessel, effected by its decommission from the USCG fleet, was the seminal event in this chapter of its biography. The erasure, by pentimento, of the letters 'USCG' and 'WP-49' and the application of grey primer-like paint over the wartime camouflage on the hull and white on the superstructure produced not a blank canvas but the low road ship described above, one free to move about the seas in the manner of a civilian vessel.

The *Northland's* ship movements and sea tracks would henceforth be subject to, and crucially protected by, maritime laws and conventions that governed non-naval boats and ships. What Kimberley Peters described as elements of the 'plural legal spaces' involved in the governance of national, international, ship, sea and shore (Peters, 2014, p. 421). This affordance enabled the Aliyah Bet assemblage the power to elude numerous interventions by its British antagonists - moments of deflection and detention – right up until the near shore Royal Navy interception that curtailed the struggle to reach the Palestine coast. The Radio Caroline ships anchored in international waters used the laws forbidding the seizure of properly registered non-enemy ships in international waters to preserve freedom to broadcast. International waters are 'Terra nullius', outside the jurisdiction of any nation-state. The same rules preserved *Northland's* freedom of movement.[90] The organizers and the crews took pains to comply with the maritime regulatory regime. They kept everything apparently above board', while concurrently employing misdirection, subterfuge and concealment to advance each leg of the voyage.

Whereas, 'Pirates seized space at sea and made it their own' (Hasty, 2014, p. 35), Mossad seized space and the maritime regulatory regime and made it their own. Mossad kept the Hagana ship just to the right side of the law (and successfully deflected detection when it did not). The outcomes of the strategy are certainly reflected in the archival records, but perhaps even more impressively in *Northland's* sea tracks traces - discernable crossing the North Atlantic, sailing past the Strait of

[90] However, the Royal Navy had seized Hagana ships in contravention of this convention, including the capture of one ship in the Strait of Gibraltar and the *Exodus 1947* approximately 22 miles from Palestine territorial waters.

Gibraltar, entering the Mediterranean Sea, passing in and out of the Turkish Straits and south through the Aegean Sea to Palestine.

Traversing the Turkish Straits illustrates this point well. The Turkish Government administered (and still does) the Montreux Convention that governs passage through the Turkish Straits. The civilian ship, with both merchant and Mossad crews and an excess of provisions aboard, passed without incident on its way to the Black Sea. Nothing about the ship, save the forged crew IDs, was outside the law. The Royal Navy destroyers were prohibited by the convention from following (though Bulgarian, Romanian and Russian naval vessels could have). The return journey was a different matter. The convention does not give a precise ratio of sanitary facilities to passengers, but the communications between the ship and the Mossad shore clearly indicate concern they could be detained due to the number of passengers aboard. British Foreign Office communiqués express a concomitant optimism that the convention could be used to halt the ship's progress.

The ship stopped in Istanbul for inspection, as required. Mossad secured permission to proceed (through various persuasive techniques) by delimiting the geography subject to the requisite inspection to what could be observed topside. In this, they were abetted by the administrator's self-interests. The Turkish Government was wholly in charge of compliance determination and by limiting the inspection it avoided delaying the ship and the logistical, diplomatic and public relations quagmire that would likely have ensued. The spatial-geometries of the accommodation adaptations, designed to conceal the presence of passengers from British sea and air surveillance, were utilized by the Turkish Inspectors who were authorized to board and inspect, but did not see. The *Northland* and its contents were simultaneously visible and invisible, known and unknown. Crucially for this discussion of state power, its onward passage remained outside the authority and influence of the British Government.

Right of passage through the Turkish Strait is one example of what Blum describes as 'the material conditions and praxis of the maritime world' (Blum, 2010, p. 670). Registration, flagging and naming, like ship categorization, are also critical elements in maritime affordances. British Foreign Office pressure on the Panamanian registration to withdraw registration from *Northland* did not cease until well into the

final leg of its voyage from Burgas to Palestine. Panama's refusal was based on a lack of evidence of illegality and resistance to British Foreign Office sanctions against ships flying its flag that were not implicated in challenging the blockade of Palestine. As with Turkey, neither coercion nor intimidation were effective in persuading the two countries to breach their higher-order interests, entangled as they were with upholding the maritime regulatory regime. The retention of Panamanian registration and its flag of convenience was essential to *Northland's* power to advance at every leg of its journey.

The *Northland* collected several names over the course of this chapter in its biography. 'NORTHLANDS' in British Government documents[91]. The 'Northern' in (Hebrew) Hagana code. *Hagana Ship The Northland* and *Medinat ha'Yehudim* (also in Hebrew). Whereas the *Paducah's* code name translates as 'salt,' there was no equivalent obfuscating code name for *Northland*. This is likely due to the confidence that Mossad had in their communications protocol and the lack of Hebrew experts outside of the educated Zionist Jewish population. Whereas the code name was a secretive designation for the ship, the addition of the Hagana name in Pause V was something else.

In naval seafaring tradition, a ship that 'nails its colors to the mast,' is refusing to surrender by affixing its pennant to whatever remains of the mast in the midst of battle. It is an eleatory act. Changing the name of a ship while at sea would have been of dubious legality but adding the Hagana name and raising the Star of David flag was not so much a name change as it was a public, visible, declaration of determined intent. Mossad intended a broad audience for the message, as evidenced by the instruction to be sure that all banners were worded in both English and Hebrew. The early morning broadcast from the ship was a further element in the barely offshore communications tactic. As with the Radio Caroline ships, the symbolic power of name and flag and the broadcast powered a mobility of a different kind (Peters, 2014, p. 419). The British Authorities, the United Nations, the international press corps, and the Jewish Palestine community were all intended receivers of the message that the Jewish State was approaching Palestine. The

[91] 'NORTHLANDS' is the name that nearly all of official British records use. That is also the name of the passenger vessel that has been confused with the USCG *Northland*.

power dynamics, however, changed substantively as the ship approached Palestine territorial waters, waters over which the Palestine Mandate Government had undisputed authority.

The British Government's earlier attempts at coercion, dissuasion and pressurization gave way to the legitimate use of state power by use of force. Force, says Dovey, 'strips the subject of any choice of non-compliance' and is 'a limited form of power since it can prevent action more easily that it can create it' (Dovey, 1999, p. 10). Preventing landfall is precisely what was at stake. Although multiple accounts of the offshore struggle suggest that the British Paratroopers (anemones) met only minor resistance, as I argued in the summary to Pause V, I believe that the strategies employed by the Mossad to inhibit access to the ship's propulsion systems and to continue to progress toward the shore was very much an active form of resistance.

I argue that the wheelman's blind steering using the secondary control room exemplifies what Malefouris argues is 'humans thinking *through* things' and what Bennett describes as an 'intricate dance between humanity and nonhumanity'. Abadi had to use his knowledge of the ship, the feel of the controls, the response of the ship to his physical instructions, observations from the two lookouts, and his imagination to propel the ship towards the objective of land. The ship, in this moment, arguably contributed a vital materiality to the actions of the Aliyah Bet assemblage. 'Not only was the ship not merely a metaphor, it was a living thing, a transformative, material site of contested politics' (Hasty, 2014, p. 356). Power relations were literally conducted from deep within the bowels of the vessel.

The ship was an essential element in the Aliyah Bet assemblage used to contest British state power as reified in restrictions to Jewish immigration to Palestine, and ultimately control of the future of the territory in the waning months of the British Mandate. Yet, the form of power at the crux of this chapter in *Northland/Medinat ha'Yehudim's* object biography is *empowerment*. In one sense, *Northland* was a mobile afforciament, a protective temporary stronghold for the passengers on board; A sanctuary at sea. But most crucially for the discussion of power relations, the ship was a critical component of the emancipation of the passengers and crew and the projected the imminent establishment of the State of Israel. Its contribution to the Zionist's 'power to' create that particular Palestine future was derived via

ship-specific affordances. Affordances that differed in prominence and intensity as its entanglement in the assemblage deepened pause by pause.

EPILOGUE

As I stood up at the close of our 2016 interview in Tel Aviv, Israeli Historian Motti Golani asked, 'May I now ask *you* a question?' 'Of course!' I replied and sat back down on his office guest chair. Good thing. After perhaps the most dispassionate and balanced discussion I'd had on this topic, he asked, 'Do you think perhaps the ship was a Golem'?[92] It was the perfect question. I had avoided, in the spirit of the exchange, saying very much about my ideas about ships and lively materiality. 'Yes, after spending so much time with this ship, I think it was a protector'. Made of steel, not clay.

The US Coast Guard Cutter *Northland* became just plain *Northland* on the Eastern Seaboard of the United States. It became *Medinat ha'Yehudim* in the Mediterranean, near the coast of British Mandate Palestine. It had several more incarnations before it was no more. *Medinat/Northland* survived the royal ramming with only a dent in the bow and some damage to a station. As the most intact and serviceable of the confiscated Aliyah Bet ships, when the state of Israel was declared, Paul Shuman became the head of the nascent Israeli Navy and the *Medinat/Northland* became the first Israeli warship *Eilat - 86*.

One of its first assignments was to escort the first ship carrying Cyprus internees to Israel. After service in the Navy as a warship, training vessel and floating barracks, it was de-commissioned in 1963 and sent to Italy to be scrapped. The ceremony took place in Haifa harbor, at that same 'Pier of Tears' where it was towed in 1947. The event was attended by people who had immigrated and served on it. When I interviewed Yehuda Ben Tzur in Caserea, he said he was one of the naval officers who commanded it for six months as part of his training. I mentioned what Motti Golani had said about the ship being a Golem. Ben Tzur looked puzzled and shrugged. 'No', he replied, 'it was just a ship.' I'm not so sure. As a friend and I were converging for a rendezvous in Jerusalem, she texted me: 'My tour guide wants to know which ship you are studying?' I texted back, '*Northland* which was *Medinat*

[92] The legend of the Golem dates back to the middle ages. The giant creature was created by a rabbi out of mud to protect Jews from pogroms in Prague.

ha'Yehudim.' When we met, I asked her if he'd recognized the name of the ship. Tracey confirmed that he knew it. He said, 'Yes, everyone knows that ship and how those ships made Israel'.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

> *'If geographers struggle to speak about the geographies of the ship,*
> *it may be because there are as many geographies of ships as there are ships and*
> *each of these create a unique geography of ocean space'.*
>
> – Anne-Flore Laloë, 2014, p. 47.

This thesis began by introducing the icebreaker *Northland* at birth as it slid down the dry dock cradle into the water at the Newport News Virginia dockyard. In 1927, it was a marvel of modern engineering, all sleek steel and state-of-the art technology, a purpose-built 'floating government' designed for the US Coast Guard's Bering Sea Patrol Force in Territorial Alaska. By 1963, it was a floating hulk anchored in the Mediterranean Sea. It was decommissioned from the Israeli Navy for the last time in Haifa in a ceremony that took on the import of a ship-of-state funeral. Which it was, as evidenced in both empirical episodes examined in this thesis. Afterward, it was destined for an Italian scrapyard. Once lifted from the water and deconstructed, 'to recover the value of its constituent value' (Crang *et al*., 2013, p. 20), its life as an object known as 'ship' was over. Still *Northland* continues to make a contribution via the traces of its sea tracks, discernable through the archives and augmented via haptic experience. In this unabashedly retro-chic historical analysis (Dittmer, 2014, P. 396) I use portions of the ship's biography to contribute new insights to the academic value chain of geographical knowledge about the relationship between ships and the exercise and contestation of state power; surfacing the what, when and how of ship-shaped power relations in highly contrasting distributed assemblages.

Northland was integral to power relations in both episodes, both entirely dependent on the presence of the ship. In 1920s and 1930s Territorial Alaska, before the age of aviation was established, there was no other option to reach the remote communities of the Bering Sea and Arctic Ocean. In Palestine, all land and air routes were effectively blocked at the point of departure, only ships protected by maritime

law and convention had the capacity to at least embark passengers, depart and set course for Palestine. Anticipating interception at the British blockade did not dissuade the organizers or passengers from the undertaking. Starting from this premise, the ship is understood to be an essential element in two assemblages of political power: the US Coast Guard's Bering Sea Patrol, and the Mossad's Aliyah Bet unauthorized immigration project. In the first case, the initial assumption is that the ship participated in the extension of dominant power over Territorial Alaska. In the second, the ship was supposed to have participated in the contestation of power by challenging the legitimacy of the British Mandate authority in post-war Palestine. In each of these assemblages, *Northland* was one ship amongst a larger fleet. Thus, it serves as an exemplar for its fellow ships, but it also provides evidence more generally about the affordances of ships with respect to political power. The case and constraints for the generalizability of the findings are discussed below.

The organization of this thesis is conventional, with perhaps the exception of the length and structure of the two empirical chapters 3 and 4. The introduction sets out the importance of ship studies in geography, citing existing scholarship and argues the case for filling a research gap; to understand how ships surface affordances through distributed assemblages, place and materiality within the frame of state power dynamics. A brief biographical sketch traces the historical trajectory of *Northland* and explains the rational for extracting the two key episodes described above from its biography to unpack and analyze with respect to the stated research objectives. Chapter 1 describes the theoretical framework for the PhD project, covers Bennett's concept of distributed assemblages and lively materiality and how that quality can be recognized and related to the affordances a ship surfaces. Chapter 2 explains the methodological approach and the individual methods used to unpack ship affordances primarily through archival methods and supplemented with 'doing' methods, including blue print manipulations and 3-D pen scale model work. The majority of the thesis is dedicated to the two following empirical chapters, each being close to 100 pages each. Each chapter is divided into three sections. An introduction to the political and geographic context in each episode, which in Chapter 3 includes details about the Northland's design and construction; several analytical 'pauses' composed of small stories, each of which is analyzed for evidence of ship-shaped political relations; followed by a chapter conclusion.

The findings from this work contribute to scholarship in maritime-oriented political geography in several important ways. First, both assemblages had a clear connection to either dominating or emancipating modes of power. When unpacked through event analysis of each pause, it becomes evident that a ship's participation can manifest as both empowering and oppressive simultaneously. Dovey argues 'in everyday life, we tend to notice power *over* while power *to* is taken-for-granted. This creates the illusion that power over is somehow primary…yet emancipation is precisely a form of empowerment' (Dovey, 1999, P. 9). *Northland* was a place of mediation and performance of wedding practices and performances. Ship plus captain together embodied sufficient authority to modify the process by which Native couples were selected for each other; conjure up the words used to perform marriage rites; and perform the ceremony on the ship's deck - the same space that was used for Deck Courts.

The Bering Sea Patrol assemblage coalesced the legal authority of the captain as a US Commissioner with the reputational authority accrued by *Northland*, the material deck spaces and enrolled the crew as witnesses to the wedding performance that united Ellie and Pilowak. Power over the marriage construct was mediated through this constellation. In Palestine, this duality of power was embedded in the operational mission of the ship. It was purchased, adapted and sailed to challenge British control of immigration to Palestine, and of Palestine more broadly. But, as its name addition clearly announced, the same Aliyah Best assemblage that opposed power also sought power of the same kind. Power to defy a state and create a state coexisted in the same assemblage.

Secondly, the findings support Bennett's approach to assemblage as distributed amongst human and non-human elements, and for the agency contributed by more-than-human elements. The *Northland* manifested state power in Alaska via its physical form and designation as a Coast Guard Cutter, an inheritance of the sea tracks from the *Bear* and other predecessors. As an icebreaker, it was capable of breaking through ice floes, creating leads for other ships and towing them to safety if need be. Although it was criticized as underpowered, in the twelve years of Bering Sea Patrol service, it was never recorded in the ship's logbooks as having been

icebound. But its power was muted by the natural environment of ice and weather; Its mobility constrained, its seaworthiness challenged and sea-handling capabilities tested such that major adaptations to mast, rigging and ballast were required to dampen the effect of sea motion in order that crew and passengers could function at sea. The sea, in effect, was a countervailing force against ship affordances. Just as ice prevented the salvage of *Baychimo* while affording the ghost ship a frozen mobility free of human intervention. Likewise, the vibrant materiality of the volcanic Bogoslof Island circumvented the ship's capability to scribe the geographic position and topography with any confidence. Indeed, the island seemed to exert its own power over the Coast Guard vessels and crews, drawing them to it as it morphed, erupted, steamed and reconfigured itself over and over and over again. In the case of Aliyah Bet, the natural environment was less a factor than the explosive detritus strewn in the seas from the war.

Finally, the contribution of *Northland's* low-road material malleability featured most prominently in the Aliya Bet assemblage, in which the ship's affordances were manipulated into an enigmatic form. The conversion of the approximately 200-foot-long ship into a crude passenger ship capable of covertly housing nearly three thousand for an extended period was an astonishing feat of imagination, but also of engineering. The continued seaworthiness of the ship was attributable to *Northland's* sturdy, ice-breaking construction. The clandestine nature of the entire operation was further manifested in the hidden spaces (sliks) built into the recesses of the ship to hide documents and, like a floating priest hole, designed to hide people to prevent their capture. So, ships participate in power assemblages in direct and indirect ways and by different means. State power to and power over not only coexist in the ship but are modified and mediated by it. And the capacity to exert state power can be constrained by the natural environment through force or resistance. Material malleability is attributable to the status of the ship where a low cost, stripped back version is open to extensive modification while remaining structurally intact and mechanically sound. Underpinning all of these capacities is the innate mobility of ships and their vibrant, Archimedean capabilities of floatation, self-righting ship motion.

Methodologically, my research in the archives mostly resembles that of other historical projects. Ship's logs, though, are uncommon sources and are worth discussing. Working through 12 sets of ship's logbooks from *Northland* for the years 1927 to 1938 was an informative and sometimes frustrating experience. The quality and quantity of the data varied tremendously, but there was a set of pages for every day of every cruise. As Laloë notes, the sea tracks 'represent first and foremost a temporal relationship with the ocean, not a spatial one' (Laloë, 2014, p. 41). This is not a particular drawback for my research, but the entries also contain only records specific to the activities of Coast Guard personnel acting in their official capacity, and do not record events that occurred under different or unofficial capacitates. Weddings were only occasionally recorded in the logs, although I have evidence from other sources that confirm they took place on *Northland*. The captain's grave-robbing excursion on St. Lawrence Island is noted only as 'Officer ashore.' Much is hidden between the lines or entirely from view. It may be of interest to note that since I began this project, many of *Northland's* Coast Guard logbooks have been digitized as a part of the 'Old Weather' project. The data, collected from cutters, whalers, and fishing vessels, was normalized and fed into a database which tracks the extent of Arctic and Antarctic sea ice beginning in the late 1800s. I used that data to produce the sea ice extent figure in the *Baychimo* Pause. In contrast with the comprehensive logbooks from *Northland's* Coast Guard service, I can find no evidence of ship's logbooks for the Aliyah Bet ships, although keeping ship's logs was certainly best practice if not a legal requirement at the time. However, the communications 'log' for *Northland/Medinat ha'Yehudim* kept in the Hagana archives is a record of radio cyphers between shore stations and the Mossad officer. It was perhaps the most useful material I came across in deciphering the events on the last few days of the ship's voyage to Palestine. The entire log was, so to speak, behind and between the lines.

The purpose of including supplementary 'doing' methods was to literally read the lines of the ship, to know it better and to create a mental picture of its spaces, develop a capacity to compare versions and interpret adaptations and recreate some of the spaces at scale to understand unusual ship-spaces. Tracing blueprints and labelling ship spaces created knowledge as to the spatial organization on board, understand how rating and rankings translated to offices, workspaces and berths by

highest rank up and forward, lowest rank low and aft. Creating models, which I think of as 3D maps, created a different level of understanding about how ship spaces were used and perhaps some hint at how they were experienced. Finally, I use a combination of drawing and modelling work to develop drawings of the ship in its Aliyah Bet version, as none existed. Then I built a partial, larger scale 3D map model of one of the sliks, to locate it on the ship and get a sense of how it was to conceal twelve bodies in a tight and concealed space. Certainly, more could be done to explore the use of model building and 3D technologies when interrogating built environments, providing a reference object for interviews or even conjuring places.

This work unpacks the unique affordances surfaced by *Northland* to two assemblages of power via aspects of place, materiality and assemblage that together effected a diverse set of sea-shaped power relations. The two biographical episodes provided a rich research surface on which to follow its trajectory through changes in its purpose, ownership, geography, and material adaptations to unearth the nature of its entanglement and contribution to power dynamics in contrasting assemblages of federal power in Territorial Alaska and challenge to imperial power in British-Mandate Palestine. The findings will be useful to scholars of maritime and historical geographers, as well as those interested in *viapolitical* perspectives and the material affordances of vessels.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: AGNEW'S SCHEMA MODIFIED FOR NAUTICAL SPACE

> '*…the boat is a floating piece of space, a place without a place, that exists by itself, that is closed in on itself and at the same time is given over to the infinity of the sea and that, from port to port, tack to tack, from brothel to brothel, it goes as far as the colonies in search of the most precious treasures they conceal in their gardens, you will understand why the boat has been, for our civilization, from the sixteenth century to the present, the great instrument of economic development, but has been simultaneously the greatest reserve of the imagination.* -Foucault, 1988, p. 27

The last two decades of geographical scholarship on maritime subjects has helpfully moved many geographers beyond terra-centric assumptions, such as John Agnew's statement that 'All places are embedded in territorial states' (Agnew, 1996) The high seas and the Antarctic being several obvious exceptions. But ship-shaped geographies continue to offer opportunities to disrupt land-locked perspectives, adapt existing concepts and propose new ones in the process. The Foucault quote above suggests that the boat (or ship) is placeless. But of course, that is an abstraction, and for empirical work to succeed in clarity and substance, nautical places must have more concrete meaning. John Agnew argues for the importance of the "Micro-geography of everyday life (work, residence, school, leisure and so on) defines the more or less-localized settings in which patterns of social interaction and group formations are realized' (Agnew, 1966, pp. 132-33). I begin with Agnew's schema for 'place' as differentiated by the terms locale, location and sense of place and adapt them for use in a maritime context.

Locale

Agnew defines locale as micro-sociological content of place, that is 'The setting in which social relations are constituted (formally or informally)' and for every day, routine interaction. Locales are 'located' according to a spatially extensive division of labor and system of material production and distribution. I interpret locale, in a nautical context, to be wholly contained in the ship when at sea and incorporating land when the ship is connected via liminal ports and anchorages. Further, there is also an explicitly material, architected built-environment aspect to the ship that must be incorporated in this definition.

Navigating the ship locale: Shore-side vernacular has adopted familiar phrases from seafaring talk. Everything is 'above-board.' So-and-so is a 'loose cannon'. He 'nailed his colours to the mast.' Terminology used to navigate on board ship and identify relative position is part of the specific spatial-temporal nature of ship-space. Navigating the ship, that is human movement

aboard, is represented and governed by nautical terminology developed over centuries (perhaps millennia). It makes no sense to say 'the north end of the ship' as you might with reference to a terrestrial structure. 'North' might shift within seconds of its utterance when at sea. Instead, it is necessary to denote locations that are statically tied to the physical structure of the ship. For example, fore and aft refer to the front and back of the ship. Aloft refers to up in the rigging. Below decks refers to any space below the main deck. Objects onboard are identified relative to positions on the ship, as in the lifeboat was abaft the cabin.' And certain ship-spaces are disciplinary, as in being 'called to the mast' for punishment. Ship position is relative to land, wind, stars and other objects (including other ships). The 'lee side' of a ship is sheltered from the wind. These particularities are essential for interpreting ship records, but understanding its participation in assemblage by way of its ship-ness, ship-spaces and mobilities of the kinds evidenced in Northland's biographical material.

Location

Location, Agnew says is 'The geographical area encompassing the settings for social interaction as defined by social and economic processes operating at a wider scale.' This idea may be best encapsulated by recent work on 'water worlds' and the 'maritime realm,' such as Phil Steinberg's writing on 'Mediterranean Metaphors' in which the Mediterranean is not merely metaphor and trope, but can stand as an exemplar of *nautical location*, the central sea that is '…a material space that is encountered by our embodied practices as well as the practices of the ocean's other (human and non-human) constitutive elements' (Steinberg, 2014, pp. 24-37). The Atlantic studies provide another example… Some places are contained within space, others stretched beyond (Massey, Space, Place and Gender, Ch. II, Place and Identity).

Sense-of-Place

Agnew characterizes the third term, *Sense-of-Place*, as a subjective local *structure of feeling*; 'A felt sense of the quality of life at a particular place and time which form nodes around which human activities circulate and which in toto can create a sense of place, both geographical and socially. This is the *geosociological* definition of self or identity produced by a place (Agnew & Muscara, 2012, p. 27). As with locale, this definition translates to a ship-board context fairly readily but needs contextualizing. This term fits Kimberley Peters' description of the pirate radio ships as places of marginality 'assembling a sense that the ship was a different place' (Peters, 2011, p. 54).

Position

Each of these three ideas can be updated to reflect contemporary approaches to place and space in human geography, and still in this 'swam of affiliate' terms (Bennett, 2010, p. 31) we are missing one key term. The mobility of the ship implies that *locale* cannot be attached to any pre-determined geographical coordinates; location is fungible, depending on seas and operational use. This is also true of *location*, in which a ship is a part of wider economic and social processes but change in ownership and operational use may vary its location. *Sense-of-place* perhaps requires the least intervention. But we still lack a geographical positioning term for just *where* a ship may be at any given time, that is - its *geographical position*. As Cresswell observed, '…places are not always stationary, A ship, for instance, may become a special kind of place' (Creswell, 2010, loc. 335). But Agnew's terms are, while useful, they are land-locked and assume changes take place in situ.

Laloë suggests that 'Place and geographical knowledge about the ocean become…centered upon a ship's perspective within a moveable and time-dependent frame.' And yet, she also argues that ships themselves are placeless on the ocean's surface as the land-based geographical graticule is troubled by the physical characteristics of the ocean (Laloë, 2014, pp. 42-48). Indeed, contemporary nautical charts carry a warning that not all markings will be exact, and recent updates using GPS technology have required significant updates). 'The methods of noting time, place and coordinates used in ships logs to indicate its position '…appear to be inherently alien to the ocean' (Laloë, 2014, pp. 47). Yet, ship geographies require that we develop a concept of ship *position*, and the most objective approach is to use time and coordinates. This may not always be sufficient though, as a ship's position has attributes that are a function of sea and weather conditions. For this reason, I propose to use the term *position* as a fourth designator for nautical place constructs. *Position* is composed of ship coordinates, time and sea/weather conditions.

APPENDIX B: ZEUSLER'S 1937 QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Please give a short dissertation on the currents in your vicinity, but months, showing average set and drift.
2. Has the wind a direct bearing on the flow of the current in your vicinity?
3. Is the current unidirectional? If not, when does it change and what reason can you assign to the change?
4. Please give a general report of the ice conditions by the month. When is ice formed, when is your harbor frozen in, when are leads first opened and when is the harbor first open?
5. Are the waters in your vicinity breeding grounds for walrus?
6. Under what conditions do the natives consider walrus hunting to be the best?
7. What are the general monthly prevailing winds?
8. Are there any fishing banks in your vicinity, and if so, what are their locations?
9. Have you any information that Little Diomede or Big Diomede were over connected and that they were a part of a land bridge between East Cape and Prince of Wales?
10. Are the walrus and seals on the increase or decrease?
11. Will the present rate of killing the walrus exterminate them?
12. Are there any clams, mussels, or other shell fish in your vicinity, and if so, where?
13. Are the eider ducks on the increase or decrease? When do they nest?
14. Have you any data in regard to set and drift of current in the Bering Sea and in the Arctic Ocean?
15. Have you any recommendations in regard to betterment of the natives as to education self-development and improvement, so as to make them self-sufficient and more efficient?
16. What effect has the use of liquor on the health, efficiency and general condition of the natives?
17. Are the natives increasing in number?
18. Please make suggestions as to how the Coast Guard can be of greater service to Alaska, especially in your community.
19. In view of the present status of the natives as citizens, what should the Government's attitude be toward their welfare?
20. What in your opinion should be the food of the native? Does white man's food reduce the vitality of the native? What do the natives in your village eat mostly?
21. Do you think there should be a trader in each village or should there be a government supervised store or should there be a community store?
22. If you had your way what kind of set-up would you have in each village?

APPENDIX C: ALIYAH BET CREW LIST

(Source: http://www.israelvets.com/roster_aliyahbet_crews_ship.html#northland)

Name	Nat	Hometown	State	Duties
Abells, Harold, R. "Hess"	CAN	Toronto	Ont.	3rd Mate
Berg, Bertram "Ben"	USZULC	Boston	MA	Chief Mate
§ Bernstein, Arthur	USZULC	Boston	MA	2nd Mate
† Biddle, James L.	USZULC			Fireman
Binder [Enden], Dave	USZULC			Fireman
† Braisely, Louis				Oiler
† Edmundson, Howard "Eddy"	USZULC	New York	NY	Messman
Freedland [Yeriel], Jack	USZULC	New York	NY	Messman
Gibraltar, Jared "Gerry"	USZULC	Boston	MA	Seaman
€ Goldberg, Sol	CAN	Montreal	Que.	
Jacks, Stanley	USZULC	Bayonne	NJ	Galley
Kahansky [Kahan], Lazarus	CAN	Montreal	Que.	3rd Asst. Engineer
¥ Kaplansky, Eddy	CAN	Montreal	Que.	Seaman
§ Kolomeitzev, Arye	USZULC	Tuscon	AZ	Chief Engineer
Konigsberg, Louis (Leib)	USZULC	New York	NY	Wiper
§ Lebow, Aaron	USZULC	New York	NY	Oiler
§ Maltese, Danny	USZULC	New York	NY	Chief Mate
§ Meltzer, Irving	USZULC	New York	NY	Chief Radio Officer
€ † Mitchell, (First name unknown)	USZULC			Captain
§ Morgan, Evan J.	USZULC			Captain
Nezinsky [Lewis], Moris	CAN	Toronto	Ont.	Seaman
Rabinovitch, ISzulcdore	USZULC	New York	NY	Seaman
Schelasnitzki [Shell],	USZULC	Detroit	MI	Chief Steward

APPENDIX D: ALIYAH BET BROADCAST SCRIPT (TRANSLATED)

2.10.47 0556

We the immigrants from the Medinat ha'Yehudim turn to the United Nations on this boat, to the Jewish settlement and the Jewish. We came from different countries and we are sons of the great Judaism and suffered loss before the war and great part of it destroyed by the Nazi occupation. For decades ever since the Zionist settlements are in the country the flow of Jewish immigration from the European countries has continues. Tens of thousands of Jews from these countries have participated with their souls in this project and many more thousands of Jews are counting on making Aliyah. They will come and participate in the labours of the people. Our fathers and mothers, sons and daughters have been separated in the awful storm that passed our country during the war with the Nazis and the annihilation that makes many of our lives difficult. We want to return and build our homes and lives again. We want to be gathered in the land of Israel. With all our hope and anticipation we learned about the results of the special committee of the UN that the state of the Jews out of the recognition that the state of the Jews, that most of the members of the committee proposed to establish, is the only answer to the Jewish questions and the establishment of our rights. It will not be foreigners that establish the state, but only the Jews. We give ourselves, our powers and our abilities to this big project and holy project, We turn to the UN that now sits discussing the Jews problem and the Palestine issue and we demand that it use its More power and political power to clear the obstacles that the British government has laid in our path, In order to remove the blockade that the mandate government has laid on the shores of the land of Israel, in order to enable us to do the things we must do. An international committee has dismissed the evil regime that prevents

the Jews from coming to Israel, the prosecution of the immigration project and the protection of the immigrants The international committee has recognized the necessity of continued immigration and recognized the rights of the Jews to go back to their country, The international committee has recognized the need and the option of establishing a Jewish state The British government stated in an international forum its decision to get out of the land of Israel. Why then does it keep fighting and preventing Jews from coming to the country, Our relatives drowned on the ship Strouma, The bad luck did not deter us, even before we left we knew the wave of immigration has been a tortuous struggle, but is the way to redemption. We, like our brothers on other ships, will not be deterred by the British path, not from the British pilots. We left knowing that the British are maintaining the siege on our homeland with the power of their army, navy and fire. We know the British can harm us. We did not imagine that after the fall of Nazism that they will keep fighting us with Nazi means. Now we find ourselves deported and killed as if Nazism was never defeated. Does the world deny us? Does the UN deny us? We demand from the United Nations to get to the right place, which should be there, and for justice. We call to the Hebrew settlement in the country. We are on the way from the diaspora to Israel. Already we see ourselves as partners with you in building. Even if our way will be tormented and long, even if we do not get to the country in this state, we will not be discouraged. We will return and protest until we are there. And so will the mass of Jews who are planning to return. We are an integral part of the forthcoming Jewish state. We are members of the Jewish Histeratud, we are part of the immigration and we see you as the national leaders for us and [name unclear]. We are sure you will do whatever you can to help us reach the shores of Israel. We are nearing the shores of our homeland and with us the word of the ships to come' (HAH, 80/623/5).